A DIARY.

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ETC. ETC.

A DIARY.

IN THE HOUR OF MORNING.

"This day——a life."—THORILD.

Stockholm, Nov. 1st. 18 . .

"ANOTHER day, another revolution of light and shade!—'Enjoy thy existence'—sayest thou, holy morning dawn, animating glance of love, rays from the Deity! Thou hast awakened me once more from my state of darkness, and given me *a day*, a new existence, *a little life in itself!* In this light thou lookest upon me saying: 'Pursue the moments! in their flight they dispense light and flowers; they conceal themselves in clouds, but only to shine forth again with the greater brilliancy. Pursue them. And suffer not thyself to be visited by the shades ere thou hast begun to live.'"

Such—with a great spirit, now departed—was my train of thought when I awoke at peep of day and saw the rays of light penetrate into my room. Involuntarily I stretched out my arms towards them. They were neither grateful nor bright—it was the reflection of a dull November day, but yet light from that Light which illumines my life's day, and which I salute with affection. May the light of my day here, like that of morning, be—a crescent light! Whether its rays shine through clouds or a clear atmosphere—is all the same, if the day does but increase in brightness, if life does but continue to promise lustre!

After a ten years' absence I revisit the home of my childhood; for a long or brief term circumstances shall determine. Independent alike in respect of fortune, and my condition in life, I can now—after a long captivity—have a relish of freedom, and at the age of thirty years follow the dictates of my own will.

I arrived here (in Stockholm) yesterday evening, some days earlier than I was expected, and therefore could not possibly flatter myself that on *my* account, the residence of my stepmother was lighted up splendidly as I found it to be on my arrival. Ah no! on the contrary, I had great trouble in meeting with any one who was willing to take the least notice of me and my concerns. At length I encountered a maid whose friendly-looking face and manner at once pleased me, and she, on learning who I was, took strong interest both in my person and luggage.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, while showing me up a carpeted well-stair-case leading to my room, "what a vexatious thing this is! Her Grace gives a little ball to night in celebration of Miss Selma's birthday; and now they have taken all the cloaks up into the lady's room; what a sight it is there. But they did not expect the lady before next week, and that is the reason of nothing being in order here."

"'Tis of no consequence!" I replied, surveying with some consternation that apartment which was lauded as "excellent" in all my stepmother's letters to me, and was now crammed full with ladies' and gentlemen's cloaks, fur-boots and galoshes. The tones of a spirit-stirring waltz by Strauss, rose up from below and made a half-exhilarating, half-depressing impression upon me. I debated internally with myself thus: "If I sit still here amid all this vacant apparel and listen to this music, thinking at the same time, 'Here am I sitting like a forlorn stranger in the land, while they are dancing and reaping pleasure below,'—why, I shall infallibly grow melancholy and form the resolution to write an appendix to Solomon's preaching: 'All is vanity.' But if I went down stairs, mingled with those who were cheerful, amused myself with looking at them, and while they were wheeling about in waltz and galopade, even *my*——"

An obscure idea here attained to development in my head as the butterfly from the chrysalis. I took fast hold of Karin (so my officious maid is called) and besought her to let nobody in the house know anything about my arrival, but to assist me in putting on my black silk dress and some other articles requisite for a hasty toilet. I wished to steal in among the company unannounced and unknown. Karin took my idea, thought it amusing, and assisted me with quickness and dexterity, so that after the lapse of half an hour I could with honour make my appearance in the saloon, and hope to become an unnoticed party among that "*foule*" I knew of old it was matter of concern to my stepmother to assemble about her on her *soirées*. And candidly confessed, I was by no means displeased, previously to my being seen, to look around me a little, as it were, to prepare myself for a new acquaintance with those relations I had not then seen for so many years.

When I entered the dancing-room they were engaged in a galop. I stole along the wall and was fortunate enough soon to find room in a corner. The music, the mingling sounds and the bright reflection from the lights, almost made my head swim. On recovering my senses to some degree, I looked round inquisitively for the faces of my kindred; above all, my eyes sought to descry my young sister Selma, though I was almost without hope in the maiden of twenty to

recognise the delicate, tender child I had left ten years since.

"But the only daughter of the house," thought I, "the heroine of the evening must still be easily discovered among the rest. She must indeed be foremost in the dance, and be done homage to and distinguished in preference to all others."

And I pursued my inquiry among the couples in the galop as they floated on before me. The dance appeared to me enchanting.

"*Ah! les reines du bal!*" was at this moment spoken quite near to me by an elderly gentleman of a lively, but at the same time rather decrepit appearance and languid expression of countenance. I looked up and saw a young officer of dragoons dancing with two young ladies, who drew my entire attention upon them, they were so beautiful and brilliant! I took it for granted that one of them must be Selma; but which? There was an extraordinarily great kindred-likeness between them, though on more accurate observation it was this very *resemblance* that made them appear so unlike. For the serene, refined, charming grace which distinguished the one who was arrayed in white gauze and blonde, was wanting in the other, whose dress was of bright-red crape and whose frame was rather the stronger; she was, however, unquestionably the handsomer. Her dancing was marked by that exuberant vivacity which—they say—gives animation to Fanny Elssler's steps, while the motions of the other (in the white dress) possessed more of that pure, noble grace, which I myself have admired in Marie Taglioni. Either might be Selma. The longer I gazed at the white one, the more she prepossessed me, the more strongly did I wish that she might prove to be my sister.

"But is it, now, possible that the rather self-willed 'little doll'—as Selma, in her days of childhood, was wont to call herself—could have changed into this sylph-like being whose countenance is radiant with spirit and innocent joy!" The other, on the contrary, displayed more of that proud "Self" which was peculiar to Selma when a child.—"Perhaps she is my sister Selma? Shall I be able to love her?"

While the struggle between the white and red rose was thus pursued within my mind, and disposed me designedly to ask no enlightenment from my neighbours, but to leave the issue to chance, I heard the gentleman who had given loud utterance to the words "*les reines du bal*" congratulated by another upon being "a rich young bachelor."

"The life of a rich young bachelor," said he, with a sigh which occasioned me to surmise that he was incumbered with just as many children as Rochus Pumpernickel,—"the life of a rich young bachelor is really a continued feast."

"The life of a rich young bachelor," replied the gentleman thus addressed also with a sigh, "is a brilliant *déjeûner*, a tolerably vapid *dîner* and a most miserable *souper*."

While listening to the conversation of these two gentlemen, and contemplating "*les reines du bal*," I observed that a gentleman of about forty years in naval uniform, with an air of frankness and vigour and a pair of serious honest-looking eyes, was regarding me. It gave me pleasure—I know not why. I remarked also that the son of Neptune continued steering closer and closer to me, and suddenly he was seated at my side. Even at this present moment I do not rightly comprehend how we fell into conversation, and still less what induced me to communicate to him my conjectures about the two brilliant stars of the ball, but least of all, how I could deport myself in so communicative and familiar a manner towards a person who was an entire stranger to me. He himself laughed at my confidence, and asked me whether I was desirous to be enlightened respecting them by him: I answered I had that evening gone out on a voyage of discovery, and had therefore taken Chance for a helmsman and meant to leave the conduct of the passage to him. My new acquaintance warned me of the danger of abandoning myself to such a helmsman, and endeavoured with address to get at the object of the enterprise. I answered evasively; the conversation took a playful turn, and I fancied it appeared as if a large ship of war were amusing itself in giving chase to a little brig, which, by rapidly and unexpectedly shifting its course, contrived to effect an escape. This led us quite imperceptibly into a very deep track—the inmost parts of the soul and of life, and we were soon doing battle on what constituted the greatest weal or woe of human existence. On this article we entertained very dissimilar views, for whilst I sought the haven of happiness, in the unruffled current of the heart, and the affections and in clearness of mind, the son of Neptune would look for it only in the vividness and strength of the feelings. I maintained that he would never get into port with this, but, contrariwise, would abide continually on the open stormy ocean. He offered nothing in the way of objection: it was precisely on the open stormy sea that he had found happiness: I pronounced myself opposed to the unquiet nature of the seaman's life, he declared himself hostile to every description of inactive comfortable existence; I spoke of the danger of shipwreck under the pilotage of the feelings, and reminded him of Odin's* words in Havamal: "Mutable is that which we possess in the bosom of another." The seaman held fast to Christianity, and asserted with its great Apostle that without love everything in the world was as mere sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. I bowed to *love to mankind*. That was precisely my *forte*. But with respect to particular connections, I thought it matter of urgent necessity to be ever able to sing:

"I care then for no one, for no one,
When nobody cares aught for me."

The seaman laughed, shook his head, and rejoined:

"Thus you could not and *would* not sing if you were happy enough to possess a child."

"Perhaps," I replied in a tone of indifference, internally pleased to find my new acquaintance what I had already conjectured—a married man, and father of a family.

We were now interrupted by the galop coming to a close; the ladies of the dance sought resting-

* In the Northern Mythology, Odin is the giver of wisdom to men. Havamal (*i. e.* Sublime Discourse) is one of the three extant parts of the ancient Edda. It is comprised in about 120 stanzas, containing precepts of wisdom (ascribed to Odin) to mankind.—Tr.

places, and my neighbour rose from his seat. The view of the dancing-room was now more free and allowed you to look through the open doors into the saloon, in which turbaned Right Honourables took possession of the divans, while some gentlemen adorned with stars and ribbons stood about them.

"Ah, that is she!" thought I, with a rush of emotion, when a lady of a noble figure and bearing became visible, conversing with an elderly gentleman, while slowly approaching the dancing-room. Yes, it was she, still the same in point of appearance, attractions, and elegant and tasteful attire. I recognised the strings of real pearl with diamond clasps laid round her neck, and the beautiful arms I wished so strongly to kiss in my childhood; I recognised the handsome countenance, the imposing and yet so graceful bearing. She was still the same as when ten years previously she stood before my eyes half a goddess, in the splendid saloon of the Residence, on the day she held her "*cour*" as lady of the Governor of the province, magnificent as a queen; yes, she was still the same as I then saw; and anything more distinguished I have not seen since then (although I have looked about a good deal in the world), and still less shall see though——*It was my stepmother.*

My heart did not beat lightly when I saw her advancing slowly towards the part where I was seated, and expected the moment of recognition. It came; my stepmother's glances lighted upon me, she started, regarded me once again with attention; I rose, she hastened towards me, and soon — we embraced each other, not without mutual embarrassment, which, however, was concealed by the surprise of meeting, and reciprocal apologies, on my part, for my premature arrival, and on hers for the condition of my chamber, &c. My stepmother then called out "Selma, Selma!" and the white rose came floating forward and I clasped my youthful sister in my arms, rejoiced that she was "the white rose," and pleased too that such hearty joy beamed from her clear blue eyes, while, blushing, she bade me a cordial welcome. At this moment my glance involuntarily met that of my quondam neighbour, who, at some distance, was attentively observing us, while a gentle half-melancholy smile played upon his lips. Hereupon my stepmother called: "Flora!" and beckoned; but Flora, who was engaged in sprightly conversation with some gentlemen did not hear immediately. Selma hastened to her, took her arm, and came back with her to me: I beheld "the red rose," the other queen of the ball, before me. Selma whispered: "Sophy, your cousin and mine, Flora."

My cousin Flora Delphin, whom I now saw for the first time, greeted me civilly, and, after a short and indifferent conversation, returned to her gentlemen.

"No more introductions this evening, my sweet Selma," I entreated. "I know that I must have several relations here still unknown to me, but I will defer making a closer acquaintance with them yet awhile."

"So much the better," answered she, "for in that case I can have you alone for a time. I will not take part in this dance; I must talk with you."

And on their arranging for a quadrille and Selma's cavalier approaching, she excused herself to him, introduced him to a young lady sitting near us, whom he led to the dance, then sat down at my side, questioned me with eager interest about things which concerned me, and, in a tone of voice that was full of tender recollections, reminded me how "good I had been to her in her childhood, had told her stories, played with her, and had got up little merry-makings, &c. to give her pleasure."

"Now Selma," I interrupted her, "you must tell me stories, but only true ones of course. For I am quite unacquainted with the world about me here and should like to be introduced into it, or, still better, have it introduced to me without any difficulty."

"Ah, in that case you have just applied to the proper person," said Selma with comic dignity, "and with a view to begin my employment as mistress of the ceremonies, why—whom in this assembly shall I have the honour of first introducing to you?"

"The stately lady there with the nodding bird of paradise plumes in her turban of silver-crape and black velvet dress, who is now speaking and laughing with your mother—a handsome woman—she might represent the queen of the night."

"She is so, too," replied Selma laughing, "Signora Luna, as we at times call her, or, 'our lady with the bright eyes,' is one of the ladies of her Majesty's court, where the night, as every body knows, is turned into day. She will please you; she belongs to the class of our very best acquaintances, and this evening Signora Luna is a new moon. Shall I now directly introduce——"

"No, no, not this evening. Signora Luna is too dazzling for me at this moment. Who is the tall gentleman now addressing her? A stately form also, but a little ostentatious."

"Respect, I pray, for Alexander the Great or the great Alexander—he has translated Aristotle's Logic and Rhetoric; a very learned man and wedded lord of the handsome Signora Luna."

"Your humble servant! But, my excellent one, here is the oddest company in the world—Signora Luna—Alexander the Great.—I am eager to know what more than earthly greatness I am now to have the honour of being made acquainted with—the gentleman in uniform there, for instance, I should like to know by name; he is now talking to a gentleman with stars; a remarkably fine countenance, but he appears to me at least to belong to the earth."

"Not so entirely, for he belongs rather to the sea. We call him the 'Viking;' as for the rest, he is Commodore Brenner—a very brave and distinguished man. Do you know whom he is speaking to?"

"No, but I should much like to know. Certainly he is called Aristides, or Axel Oxenstjerna. I fancy I have seen him before."

"That is Baron Thorsten Lennartson. You will see him here frequently. He was Felix Delphin's guardian and is still in that relation to Flora."

"He is the same, I thought I recognised again. You have given him no by-name, Selma. But I will give him one."

"And what?"

"I will baptize him *the* Baron to distinguish him from a crowd of other barons; for he appears

to me as if he could be lord of himself. What is your opinion?"

"You say excellent things. It seems as if you had known him for a long time."

"I saw him once, a long time since, and—— but yonder beside Flora stands a person whom also I fancy I saw a long time ago, a regularly-formed, but marble-cold face, and sallow, Voltaire-like features."

"Also one of your relations. Your and my own brother-in-law St. Orme, the Envoy. He came here from Paris a few months back."

"Virginia's husband. Ah, I ought to have known him again. But it is above ten years since I saw him at Virginia's wedding. How beautiful was *she!* That she must so soon quit the earth! A year after her marriage."

"Yes, on the anniversary of her wedding-day," said Selma in a tone of voice which betokened painful remembrances. I therefore asked in continuation:—

"And that young officer with whom you were just now dancing, a remarkably handsome young man?"

"A kinsman again. Felix Delphin, Flora's brother. Isn't Flora beautiful?"

"Very beautiful."

"And how spirited, how richly gifted. She has at least a dozen accomplishments."

"That is almost too great a number," I replied laughing. "And now my thanks, Selma, for having entertained me so agreeably. I now perceive a gentleman making towards you with dancing intentions, and you durst no longer throw your partners into distraction on my account. Be at ease about me; I shall amuse myself excellently with looking at the dance and observing the new interesting acquaintances I have made. Signora Luna, Alexander the Great, the Baron——"

"Bestow a glance, too, on the Philosopher," said Selma, pointing with a roguish air to a servant in the family livery, who was coming up to us with a tray of ices, and who had a very serious expression of countenance with the features of a parrot. "Take care of yourself, Jacob," she pursued, turning playfully towards the man, "and look before you, lest we knock you over."

"Ah, heaven forbid, Miss," replied the Philosopher in a suppressed voice, while a sudden light flashed over his face, which, however, immediately re-assumed its staid expression on his stopping with his salver before me.

The "Miss" was soon floating away in the waltz, light as a bird in air.

Shortly after my stepmother came with the "rich young bachelor," and presented him to me with the words (in French) "Your Uncle, X,—the Court Chamberlain. ."

My uncle seated himself beside me and with great civility began a conversation, which passed from some compliments paid to myself to a critique on others, which was tolerably pointed, but—in a spiritual sense—savoured not of so good digestion. Was it that I felt fatigued from travel and the noise of the ball, or that the conversation I had but just enjoyed had spoiled me; certain it is, that now to my eyes a dull veil spread itself over the brilliant and animating picture before me. Nevertheless, I listened with pleasure to his encomiums on my stepmother.

"A most excellent lady," said my uncle, "I know nobody in whom I have such great confidence, no one on whom one may rely so. If at any time I do a little thing in the way of kindness in a quiet manner and do not wish it to come to light, I always turn to her."

The Viking had in the mean time left the company, and on going out had cast half a look of farewell to me, which remained like a little luminous spot in my memory. The brilliant phenomenon of "Signora Luna" vanished from our horizon in order to appear at court, where it was her period of attendance. I saw Selma only when during the pauses between the dancing, she came springing to me with some kind word or question; in like manner I saw her now at the side of her mother, now with some other elderly member of the company, always cheerful and attentive as if wishing to gladden all.

After supper there occurred a little affair which made a lasting impression on me. In the Saloon there arose an animated stir, and I caught sight of my sister lifted up in her arm-chair beneath the chandelier, whose light beamed upon her; spirited cheering from the gentlemen was heard at the same time.

The "Baron" was one of those who thus exalted the young heroine of the fête. Beautiful and like a princess she sat there, in the brilliant light, radiant with the charms of youth and modest joy. An exclamation of admiration and homage went through the whole assembly. On lowering my eyes from the almost dazzling sight, they rested on another countenance, whose expression shot a thrill of pain through my heart. It was Flora's. Vexation, envy, anger were depicted in the almost convulsive motion which quivered along and disfigured the beautiful features. But it was only for a moment. While her eyes encountered mine the expression changed, and soon after she was laughing and bantering with St. Orme, who seldom quitted her side, and whose cold, observant look had something in it that troubled me.

On my wishing to steal away from the festive scene, my stepmother showed strong evidence of accompanying me up to my room, but suffered my zealous opposition to determine her to remain quietly behind and not to let Selma, who was dancing again, have any intimation of my withdrawal.

When I gained my chamber I found it completely transformed. The apparel that was hung around had vanished, and good order, taste and benevolent care had put their seal upon the arrangements in the large, beautiful apartment.

"The young lady herself has been up here and looked to everything," said Karin, as she fed the fire, that had burnt down in the stove, with fresh fuel.

"Thanks, my young sister," I spoke in my heart. I was weary and soon fell asleep, but had disquieting dreams. I fancied I saw all those persons to whom I had directed my attention in the course of the evening standing up in a quadrille, exchanging menacing looks and waiting only for the moment of attacking each other; I found myself in the midst of them and was on the point of jousting with my stepmother. When suddenly there came floating towards us a sylph-like being, with brilliant wings, smiling lips, and enchanting, Zephyr-like motions, danced between

and entwined us with an invisible and tender band; and this sylphide, this second Taglioni was—Selma! When she appeared the excitement of feeling abated, bitterness ceased, the hostile parties formed in "*chaine*," and I fell into a sweet, refreshing sleep, which enabled me to forget the whole world, till the young morning awoke me.

And now while quiet prevails everywhere in the house, in which they all seem reposing after the dance, I will take rather a closer view of my past and present circumstances.

With my stepmother I have passed through two dissimilar periods. The first I will call:

THE PERIOD OF MY IDOLATROUS WORSHIP.

At the age of eleven years I saw my stepmother for the first time, and was prepossessed with her to adoration. This continued to my fifteenth year, when I was separated from her. But bitter were the days of this period of my idolatrous worship. For never did golden Idol abide more deaf and taciturn to the prayers of its votaries, than did my stepmother to my affection. Besides this, I was a child of a very violent temper, and my entire character formed an antithesis to the Beautiful and the Agreeable, which my stepmother estimated so highly and about which, in quotations from Madame de Genlis, she constantly discoursed. I was compared with the enchantresses who figure in that lady's romances and reduced to a small scale. In a word, my stepmother could not rightly endure me, nor I—Madame de Genlis and her Graces, that occasioned me so much pain. Ah! the sun-burnt, wild girl, who had grown up in the rude regions of Finland, whose life had been past in the forest and on the heath, by mountain and stream, and amid dreams as wild and romantic as the scenery in which she had grown up;—this damsel was in truth no fit character for the saloon and French graces. Transferred from the rugged and bracing scenes of her childhood to the splendid residence, where large mirrors on every side reflected each motion and seemed scornfully to mimic every free gesture that bore not the stamp of grace; she grew *timid*, timid of herself, timid in the presence of all men and especially of the goddess of the palace. The governess and the domestics called me the "gipsy-maid," and the "gipsy-urchin."

My stepmother was never harsh in her words or treatment; but she crushed me by her slighting compassion, her cold neglect, and soon I could not approach her without glowing cheeks and a heart so swollen (if I dare use the expression), with sighs of anguish that my tongue sought ineffectually for words. To discover any defects in my stepmother was beyond my skill. Every fault lay certainly in me. But ah! I knew not how to deport myself so as to become different and agreeable to her. I know that during the period in question, I have more than once on my knees implored Heaven never to bestow a lover on me if it would vouchsafe to me the love of my stepmother instead. Yet Heaven, deaf to my prayers, gave me lovers, but not the affection of my mother. And I was obliged to learn how to dispense with it; a circumstance which was rendered the more easy to me by my being separated from her and removed into another sphere of life;—equally abounding with pains, but of another kind.

Five years later I again returned to my home and sojourned there some time. This epoch of my connection with my former Idol may be called:

THE EPOCH OF OPPOSITION.

For it was, in point of fact, the reverse of the former. By wrestling hard with myself and with life, I had acquired a stern and truth-loving character, that unsparingly looked for reality in all things, and contemned as wretched froth everything in life that appeared mere gilding. *French* worldly prudence and education, and grace were my aversion, and I now looked down upon them with the same high-bred contempt with which my stepmother had previously regarded my world of nature. The glittering veil through which I had hitherto viewed her was fallen away. I now perceived *faults* in her, and saw them through a magnifying lens. She still pleased me, but I no longer loved her.

I had become enamoured of Thorild's spirit and had drunk in his love of truth and ingenuousness, but also something of his little agreeable manner of expressing them. And Madame de Genlis and Thorild, in the person of my stepmother and myself respectively, now encountered each other in anything but a pleasing manner. For every quotation from Madame de Genlis, I was prepared with a citation from Thorild—always in hostile opposition to the former—and my stepmother answered in the same spirit. The French Comtesse, however, was by-and-by compelled to retreat before the Swedish philosopher, that is to say, she abandoned the ground on which such a rude lout laid about him. It is a strange, half-melancholy recollection to me that at this period my stepmother was really afraid of me and shunned me, from evident alarm of my unsparing austerity. She still sought frequently to rule and overawe me,—to take up the sceptre again; but ineffectually, it lay shattered in her hand. She felt it was so, and retreated in silence, sometimes in dejection.

When I call to remembrance the feeling of harshness which at times took hold of me on observing this reaction in our relative position, I cannot repress a secret shudder, and I fain would admonish all too strict parents in the words of the Apostle: "Fathers! provoke not your children to wrath."

During this period the fault was mostly on my side. But I was embittered by the recollection of what I had suffered, and besides—notwithstanding my study of Thorild—I had very obscure views of life and was unhappy in my heart. This may be pleaded in excuse. My stepmother, a cheerful, graceful and much-beloved lady of the world, was entirely accustomed to the sunny side of life and would only look on this. I was more used to its darker aspect, and thus we continued more and more to separate.

A sort of connecting link between us at this time was Selma, a weakly but charming child, whom—I know not how—a sort of incomprehensible sympathy seemed to draw to me, while, agreeably to my way of thinking derived from

Thorild, I dissented entirely from the manner in which she was idolized in the family. But yet I could not forbear inclining to her. She was the favourite and the chief occupation of her father. He was a friend and pupil of the great Ehrensvärd, a man whose sense of the beautiful was correct and pure, and who wished to mould his daughter to the beauty and harmony of the ideal perfection he had conceived; none of the eleven thousand heroines of the modern drama and romance, but the antique *Antigone*—so beautiful as a woman, because of such noble humanity—was the model to which he early directed his daughter's eye and heart. Thus he created in her a new Antigone, and through her enjoyed a life which a very frail state of health rendered sufficiently barren of joys.

My stepmother was at this period strongly prepossessed in favour of her daughter Virginia, whose beauty and character might well flatter the pride of a mother. Admiration of her and tenderness for Selma, brought us at times into unison.

We were once more separated, and now that we are met again after a lapse of ten years, I am not without solicitude about this new epoch of our living together. Will it effect a union or a more lasting separation? One of the two is a certainty; for my stepmother has no more been stationary during this decennial term than I myself. Sorrow we have both experienced. My stepmother has lost alike her partner and her beloved eldest daughter, and I have—But no matter; that is past, and I am free. That I am a better woman than when we last met I venture to hope. Philosophy, which then made me so proud and disputatious, has since induced a peaceable disposition in me; *Thought* has laid his ordering hand quietly upon my brow, life is more clear to me, and my heart is becalmed. Books are my favourite society and Reflection is a friend that accompanies me through life, teaching me to cull sweets from every plant of existence, even the bitterest. Thorild is still a star of the first magnitude to me, but I no longer follow him blindly and have got eyes even for the constellations of Madame de Genlis. But in one thing I will continually follow the philosopher—in his precept, to study without ceasing and to inquire after the good in all things.

On the strand where I was born—in the alder-crowned streams of Kautua, while a child, I frequently went a pearl-fishing, when the heat of the summer sun had diminished the depth of the water. I fancy I now see the bright, cool waves plashing about my feet; I fancy I see the pearl-oysters which accident had thrown up in straggling heaps on the sand of the little verdant island. I used to accumulate whole piles of those oysters on the shore, and when I found a pearl in one of them—what joy! Frequently they were imperfect, but sometimes I discovered one of real beauty. Now I will again go out to seek for pearls, but—in the stream of life.

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2 November.

I was interrupted in my writing yesterday morning by a messenger who summoned me to breakfast; and that messenger was my young sister, whose silver-clear voice inquired at the door of my room: "May we come in?" "Yes, assuredly we may. Sylphs, moreover, it is no easy matter to exclude."—And gladly do we open door and heart when a being like Selma desires admission, and with benevolence and joy beaming from the eye floats into our presence amid evidences of friendship and affection. She was so charming—my young sister—in her bloom of youth and life, her plain but exquisitely tasteful dress, and above all, her prepossessing manner, that in her I fancied I saw a living embodiment of that muse of Franzen whose name she bears. "God preserve thee, thou beautiful creature!" was my silent thought while regarding her, and almost a painful foreboding forced tears into my eyes.

Not without a beating heart did I follow her down stairs, and prepared myself to see my stepmother and my home by the light of day.

But my feeling of depression vanished when I entered the inner apartment and my stepmother advanced to meet me with gestures and words betokening the most cordial welcome. Besides, everything in the room was comfortable, air, furniture, even to the inviting breakfast-table, which glistened with silver and real porcelain.

"This is good," thought I.

But nothing afforded me greater pleasure than a collection of good oil-paintings, which adorned the walls of both parlours. Just as I was on the point of saying something about this, Flora entered. I might scarcely have recognised the queen of the ball of yesterday. Her beautiful skin seemed clouded by daylight, her eyes were languid, her attire negligent, and her handsome face disfigured by an evident trait of ill-temper. Selma, on the other hand, is seen to advantage by the light of day; her complexion is pure and fair, and her eyes have the most beautiful lustre and the serenest glance I have ever seen in a human eye.

We sat down to breakfast. We talked about the ball of the previous evening. In the course of the conversation my stepmother delivered one of her royal speeches, which I knew of old, and which constantly annoy me a little. I am wont to observe silence while those harangues are in process of delivery, but in my inward man there stirs a secret opposition, which I fancy is audible to my stepmother; at least, I do not know for what other reason she so frequently rivets a challenging glance on me. Selma's merry remarks, however, interrupted the speech and made us all laugh. Flora grew excited, witty, and satirical. I had my word also and our gracious lady mother appeared very much amused. We reviewed several of our acquaintances at the yesterday's ball, and criticised divers toilets. During these recensions Selma winked roguishly at my collar, and was disposed to regard it as rather "*rococo.*" My mother inspected my dress, and also was inclined to deem it rather "*rococo.*" On this I reminded them that my entire person was rather "*rococo;*" but that was denied with equal decision and courtesy. My stepmother protested that I was exactly at the finest period of life—"the modern age"—for a handsome woman, "*la femme de trente ans, la femme de Balzac,*" and added several things only half-pronounced, but yet intelligible, about how well I had preserved my youthful appearance, my complexion, my eyes and my hands; which I, poor daughter of Eve, listened to with pleasure. Selma was positively bent on undertaking the care of my

toilet, that "this too" might be modernised. I promised to subject myself to her tyranny.

After breakfast, my stepmother and I continued the conversation *tête à tête*, and during this I observed that her countenance looked considerably older, and that there was something of trouble and excitement in her look, which I had not previously discovered: her features, however, had not lost their noble beauty. While we were conversing together Selma watered her flowers, and sang at her employment in a half audible tone of voice and most pleasing manner. The eyes of my stepmother often turned to her as to their light; Flora was in a very unsteady temper: now she would open a book, which she immediately threw away from her; now she sat down at the pianoforte and played something with great facility, leaving off in the middle of the piece; then she went and arranged her hair and viewed herself in the glass; finally, she took her seat by the window and made observations on the passengers. Internally I called her "Miss Caprice."

Thus things stood in our apartment when, at a pause in the conversation, we heard a low shrill whistling without, which approached nearer to the room we were in.

My stepmother cast a troubled look at the door, Selma's song was hushed, Flora looked hastily away from the window and—towards St. Orme, who just then entered the room. He and I were now formally introduced to each other. The repulsive feeling with which his manner inspired me, was not abated by the way in which he shook my hand. The method in which people take hold of the hand makes a peculiar impression on me, and I cannot forbear drawing conclusions from it, but more by instinct than reason; for my rational faculty refuses to allow itself to be guided by things which may be purely accidental. But I cannot help it—a full warm grasp takes hold of my heart, whereas a slight, lukewarm or stiff touch is repulsive to it. There are people who press your hand in such a manner that it smarts for some time afterwards; some there are, too, who assail it with two fingers; from these—— preserve us.

But to return to the Envoy, whose "shake,"—slight and sharp though given by a soft hand,—did not please me. He passed from me to Flora, whose hand he kissed, and was then going to lay his arm familiarly round Selma's waist; she avoided him, however, and called me to come to her and make acquaintance with her bulbous plants which she cheerfully introduced to me under the names of "King Hiskia," "Lord Wellington," "Grand Vainqueur," "L'ami du Cœur," "Diana," "Galatea," and of several other genii that lay concealed in the bulbs of the plants, but to our delight were to unfold themselves in the beams of the winter sun. We were interrupted in this by Flora's brother, Felix Delphin, who presented Selma with a half-blown monthly rose. She accepted it with a blush. Aha, my young sister! but I know not whether I can bestow thee on young Delphin. His remarkably handsome and good-natured face has a certain displeasing turn of expression which bespeaks an irregular life.

The Envoy said something to my stepmother in an undertone, at which she changed colour, rose with an unquiet look, and, accompanied by him, went out of the room.

I left the young trio occupied with deciding upon the pleasures proposed for the day and the week, and repaired to my chamber. The latter commands a glorious prospect and affords me an opportunity of contemplating on a free and broad expanse of sky, the shifting diversities of light and shade, cloud and azure tints which impart so much life and variety to the vault above our heads.

We reside on the Blasieholm, just on the border of the tree-studded place where the Palace de la Garde reared its towers for ages and was burnt down in *one* night. From my window I can discern and hear the broad roaring stream which separates the city from the Norrmalm, and on whose strand so many bloody battles have been fought. I see the harbour, the floating-bridge, the royal castle with the Lion-hill, the northern bridge, the Holm of the Holy Spirit, the bright blue waters of the lake of Mälar and the southern mountains. Above the clusters of houses on the various holms the spires of the church-towers rise boldly. On the left I have the church of St. Catherine, to the right St. James's; full in front of me the royal gardens with their luxuriant avenues, and—I should not be able to get to the end were I to enumerate all that I can see from my window.—And in my room I have my pencil, my books, and—myself.

November 5th.

I am informing myself about those who compose the family, at least as far as the outward man is concerned. For "rightly to discriminate minds," and from the phenomena they exhibit to penetrate to their real intrinsic nature requires longer acquaintance. My internal question to every one is: "What do you wish—what do you seek to accomplish in life?" on this principle I botanize in human characters, and reduce them to classes.

"You must see Flora's drawings; you must hear Flora sing; you must see and hear Flora declaim: Flora must show you her poetical and prose delineations and her portraits; they are so witty and entertaining."

In this manner I frequently hear Selma talking at present, and she never allows me rest till I have seen and admired all; and have expressed admiration for all without in anywise committing myself in point of good taste, for Flora's talents for art are excellent in several respects. But still more prominent, I fear, is her *amour propre*. Or what else do such expressions as the following attest? viz. "I am not like ordinary people;" "If I were like others why—" "But I am really most peculiar"—"I cannot descend to the level of these every-day characters," &c.?

Thus, with Flora, the principal person seems to be an "*I*," whereas with Selma it is a "*You*." But I will not judge Flora precipitately. Selma procured me a very agreeable forenoon yesterday by making me acquainted with several masterpieces among her beautiful collection of pictures. The collection was a present from her father, who formed it himself during his sojourn in Italy. In the accurate knowledge of the spirit of the different schools of art, and the pure, correct sense of the beautiful which it betokens, you recognise the pupil of Ehrensvärd. During the inspection the conversation turned on Selma's own sojourn in

Rome. After Virginia's death, she accompanied her parents thither, who, by this journey, sought alike to dissipate their grief and an opportunity of improvement for their remaining daughter's taste for the higher productions of art. Here Selma's sensibilities alike to the beauty and the pains of life were awakened; for here she lost that father she adored. Lennartson, who was then in Rome, and had participated in her hours of joy, became her consolation and stay in the time of tribulation. With filial and fraternal care he made the case of the two afflicted ladies his own, and faithfully escorted them back to their native country. Selma spoke with hearty emotion of all that he had done for her. In the evening came St. Orme and Young Delphin. The former presented Flora with a beautiful armlet, at which she expressed great delight and let St. Orme himself fasten it on. He then raised her arm, kissed it and Flora—allowed this! Selma looked on with a troubled expression and blushed.

This evening we separated into three parties. Selma and Felix threw shuttlecock and recited dialogues in an adjacent room; her jests and silver-clear laugh reached us. Flora allowed the artificial fire of her wit to be kindled by St. Orme, who enlivened her by his satire, while he obviously swayed her and led the conversation. This amused me although I understood not his secret allusions, nor the chagrin they at times excited in Flora. My stepmother let her light shine before me and informed me about the posture and relations of state affairs. I suffered myself to be edified, gave both ears to all three parties, and occasionally made some sapient remarks on my stepmother's views, while with the earnestness of a Sybil I laid out my cards in order to read the book of fate. For I should be no legitimate daughter of the home of magic arts—Finland—if I possessed not skill in the science of prophesying by cards and coffee dregs. True, I was never a perfectly worthy pupil of Liboria, the celebrated fortune-teller, who initiated me into the mysteries of her craft, and have never laid out my cards with her devotion and genius, but——to be brief, it amuses me to read the workings of fate in the cards, and I have frequently entertained others with it. In the present instance, too, I found diversion in it.

When the evening had passed away, the company departed, and Flora and myself were passing along the little corridor to our bed-rooms, which lie on either side of it, she stood still and, turning hastily towards me, said:

"You certainly think I am in love with St. Orme!"

"Hem," I replied, "I should by all means think it looked like it." (Flora had really coqueted with St. Orme this evening.)

"And don't you know, my wise Sibyl, that appearances often delude us? And such, too, is the case here. We must often appear what we are not, in order to accomplish our wishes. Cunning and guile are given to woman that she may rule those who would lord it over her. They are her legitimate weapons."

"So they often say, but I have not found it so. I have observed that the power of truth and sincerity — when exercised with prudence and charity—is the only true and real power alike with men and women."

"Truth and sincerity!" exclaimed Flora sarcastically. "Show me where they are to be found! We all play the hypocrite towards one another every day of our lives, however saintly we may feign to be. How is it, for instance, between us two? Have we not been in company for several days past and played the part of courteous cousins towards each other, while I do believe that in our inmost hearts we think very little of one another. Or, what is your opinion?"

"I hold the same persuasion with you"—replied I, enlivened by this candour.

"Very good," pursued Flora, "would it not be well if we resumed our real characters and—hated each other!"

"Why not?" said I in my former vein, "it may prove an entirely new way to love."

"I like novelty," rejoined Flora, laughing too. "From this day forward, then, we are avowed enemies, and reciprocally cherish our little hatred. Isn't it so, Miss Philosophy?"

"It is a bargain, Miss Caprice!"

Laughing, we shook hands and parted, better friends than we had formerly been.

Notwithstanding the assertions of Flora, I this night formed, according to my humble surmising, two matches—coupling Flora with St. Orme and Selma with Felix. It now remains for me to provide for my stepmother and myself. Ah well! we will mutually solace each other in our age and rule the state conjointly. Thorild and Madame de Genlis will assist us.

6th November.

My humble surmising has been brought to nought, and by whom?—The Baron.

At breakfast Flora and myself explained in a cheerful manner the agreement we had come to on the foregoing evening. My stepmother took the matter in the playful spirit in which it was made known, and laughed at our "hate-covenant." Selma, on the other hand, did not view the affair jocosely, but regarded us with serious, almost sorrowful looks. I endeavoured to put her at ease by pointing out to her a new way to friendship in *our hatred*. She grew cheerful again and singing:

"Now and then to contend
Does no harm in the end," &c.

She left us, in order to attend to the domestic concerns of the day. Shortly after came Baron Lennartson. After a brief conversation in common, he led Flora aside and spoke for a long time with her in an under tone. He appeared very urgently to beg something of her, and in doing this seized her hand more than once. Nor did Flora seem to offer anything in objection. I looked at my stepmother and she at me.

"A most friendly relation seems to subsist between guardian and ward," said I.

"Yes," replied my stepmother, "but they are more to each other than guardian and ward."

"What! are they betrothed?"

"Yes; but it is not yet publicly declared, nor generally spoken of."

"Flora," I continued, "will, to be sure, be of age next spring, and will then have a considerable fortune at her disposal."

"Only the interest of it. The capital, agreeably to the testament of the uncle, to whom Flora and

her brother are indebted for their entire property, can only be at the disposition of her future husband. The testator was a morose old man, and had no confidence in ladies' administration of affairs. He also ordained that Flora should not marry before her twenty-fifth year (which she attains in spring), on pain of losing a considerable portion of her inheritance."

Selma came in; Lennartson closed his interview with Flora and went, after kissing her hand and whispering in a low but emphatic tone of voice, "Think of it."

"That was indeed a very earnest conversation," said my stepmother rather inquisitively to Flora, when the latter, after a glance in the glass, approached us with sparkling eyes.

"Yes," said Flora, "he is so good, so excellent. One must do all he desires."

I sighed aloud.

"What 's the matter? Why does Sophy sigh thus?" asked Flora.

"Because I conjecture you will very soon be made happy by accepting Lennartson's hand; and I must still cherish my hate."

"Ah," replied Flora, laughing, "do not grieve yourself on that account yet. The question concerned Felix more than myself," she added in a half-melancholy manner. "My gentleman guardian wishes me to become a pattern, an example, a companion to him; but I cannot exactly boast of my influence over my brother. And I know well who could operate more favourably upon him than I, and transform my dear Felix into a very 'Phœnix' if *she* would. What do you think, Selma?"

Selma turned away, and said in a low tone—"We will not talk about that."

"Very well, we will talk then about my dress for the masked ball!" exclaimed Flora with exuberant vivacity. "Come and help me to select and match the colours; you have such good taste."

She took Selma's arm, and the two cousins tripped away singing.

On my going up into Flora's room afterwards with a message to Selma, I found both in spirited conversation, amid gold and silver crape and pieces of silk.

"But, Flora, that is too expensive," said Selma.

"But it will be divinely beautiful," replied Flora.

"But you may make it beautiful in another way, and the difference of price is really considerable. You have just promised Lennartson to be an example to Felix."

"Yes, yes, in a general way, but not in every little thing. In such matters I will follow my own fancy. Dear Selma, don't put on your airs of wisdom now; they don't suit you; be a little more gay. Let us now pass to my turban. Ah, aunt! that 's excellent! Aunt shall tell me——"

And Flora turned to my stepmother, who just then entered, and without any hesitation acceded to Flora's plans about the valuable costume which was to transform her into a Circassian.

She then said to me, at the same time embracing Selma—"What do you think of this child's stopping at home with her old mother, Sophy, instead of driving to the masked ball at W * *'s?"

"I like her for it," I answered.

"How could Miss Philosophy form any other judgment of so wise a resolution?" observed Flora a little pointedly.

"But if I," continued my stepmother, winking complacently at me—"but if I take upon myself the expense of the entire costume——"

"That mamma will not do," exclaimed Selma, "if she loves me. It is really the fact that I have no desire to go to this ball, and still less to ruin myself for it. My mother, moreover, would go merely on my account; and, taking all things into calculation, I am certain I shall spend the evening more pleasantly at home."

"Why you mean to win Lennartson's heart," said Flora with acrimony.

"Flora!" exclaimed Selma, with a glance of astonishment and wounded innocence, while her eyes filled with tears.

"Pardon!" Flora entreated, kissing her glowing cheeks; "I did not mean what I said. But what I really meant to say was, that you are more deserving of him than I."

We all now got busied amid silks and costumes.

9th November.

Selma has transformed my wardrobe, and constrained me to become modern; and I have permitted this transformation, seeing it gave her and my stepmother pleasure. And my stepmother! She has embarrassed me by her handsome presents. But it afforded her such obvious delight to bestow, that I could not do aught but accept them with gratitude.

To-day, in child-like joy at my noon toilet, Selma exclaimed:—

"Ah, I could wish Balzac saw you! He would forthwith produce you in a romance, and make you inspire three desperate passions at the least!"

"That would be," said I, "a strong proof of the power of his poetic fancy, for in reality I shall not again inspire a single passion."

"Hem, hem, hem!" my stepmother joined in with a civil diplomatic air.

"And neither do I wish it," I continued—

> "The age of folly has reached its close,
> And wisdom's day now come."

"A wisdom," said Flora, "which probably savours a little of the fox *vis-à-vis* the grapes. I for my part will never believe that a woman does not wish to please, to win hearts and to have an oblation of incense and sacrifice; be her name Cleopatra, or Ninon, or St. Philosophy."

"St. Philosophy might teach you another view some day," replied I with seriousness; and my stepmother, who at times seems a little apprehensive that the hatred between me and Flora might prove earnest, made speed to divert the conversation by assembling us to dinner, at which Selma's gay sallies put us all in a cheerful temper. Flora and myself made various comments upon our hate-covenant, and inserted several clauses and paragraphs. My stepmother interwove them with pleasantry and laughter. As things stand at present, I think we are an alert little band, and can contribute very much to each other's amusement.

12th November.

Our every-day life begins to stand out more and more distinctly formed to my view. In it there

prevails a great deal to beguile the attention, and I am glad to withdraw from it into my solitary chamber. The young ladies trifle away their lives, but in very different manners. Flora is perpetually in an uneven and very frequently an ill temper. The slightest cross occasions a storm. Selma, on the other hand, has a golden disposition; her entire character is harmony. This you may perceive in her tripping, graceful gait, and cheerful singing, which proclaims her arrival or presence in this or that part of the house, while she is attending to the concerns of the household. At times she has a sort of dancing attendance on my stepmother; now she participates in all Flora's revolutions, and now she is providing for the visitors who come to the house daily. The domestics obey her with cheerfulness; for she ever speaks kindly to them, and her directions bespeak goodness and discretion. Even "the Philosopher" brightens up at sight of her. In a word, she is life and sunshine to the house. The only trait in her that troubles me, is a tendency to be unduly satirical, which is frequently prominent in her, and which—shall I say so?—sometimes runs into *malignity*. This is a harsh word, yet I think it is truly applied. But with the buoyant animal spirits which Selma possesses, and her daily society with Flora, it is not an easy thing to preserve the correct measure and harmony; and the pleasure my stepmother has in everything which enlivens and seasons life, and her affection for the young maidens, does not allow her to perceive that they often scatter about them Cayenne pepper instead of innoxious salt.

A great deal of *courtoisie* but very little confidence prevails between my stepmother and me. I think we mutually fear each other a little. Usually we get daily a little hour's *tête-à-tête*, during which we together discuss the affairs of the state, and institute our "*réflexions chrétiennes et morales*" on the course of time and things. In this, and amid the greatest possible politeness between us, I observe that we secretly labour to enlighten, convert, and startle each other by our profound words and views; and then it really happens that, while we are striving to put the political machine together, the band which unites us is well nigh snapping asunder; for although we both believe we stand in the most accurate *juste-milieu* of divine justice, yet my stepmother inclines very considerably to the aristocratic side of society, whereas I lean towards the democratic. My stepmother, who in her earlier position as wife of the Governor-General, exercised not an unimportant influence over the concerns of the province, thinks she is in possession of all the knowledge, experiences, and address of a regent. I, on the other hand, fancy that, from my philosophical point of view, I see and understand things a little better; and all this at times excites a little difference between us, which however does not proceed so far as to become violent; for when my stepmother elevates her voice with a—"Believe me, my friend," then I am silent, and content myself with putting on an air of incredulity; and whatever opposition I may make, I ever surrender to my stepmother the last word or the last sound; namely, the diplomatic "Hem—hem—hem."

In the evening the family are frequently at home (it is said that at New-year things will be otherwise), when Felix Delphin, St. Orme, and Lennartson often join them. I see plainly that the Baron has an eye directed searchingly on St. Orme and Flora. I often fancy that his glance turns from the brilliant, effect-seeking Flora to Selma, and rests with a kind of tender attention upon her, and she——why are her eyes in his presence continually shaded by their long, dark lashes? Why do we then hear nought of those gay sallies, the well-turned and pointed remarks which are generally peculiar to her? Yet, Flora would not brook such. I have now and then remarked a piercing, jealous glance flash from Flora's eyes upon her. But I also have my share in this kind of look, when Lennartson bestows a considerable part of his attention on me—a circumstance which, I am glad to say, is not of infrequent occurrence.

The Baron——no! no description of him. Bulwer, who has so often cast a glance into the heart of the noble-spirited woman, rightly observes what matter of indifference it is to such a one whether a man be handsome or ill-favoured. It is the expression of character in manner, gesture, and word, which attracts or repels. Not a word, then, about the Baron's stature, figure, hair, teeth, &c. I should not be able to say a great deal on this subject; but this I do know that the impression which his presence produces upon you is such that you do not forget it, neither do you wish to forget it. You feel yourself elevated, as it were, by it, and the glance of his eye—yes, I must say a word about that.

There are eyes in which you fancy you perceive a brighter world. Of this description must be those of Schelling, and therefore I am desirous some day to look into them; there is, too, a look which I will call by preference the *statesman's*. Some one has said that "philosophers see more light than forms;" and I will here say, "the majority of men see more forms than light;" but the true statesman beholds at once all the forms of life, and that too in their appropriate social light. His vision is at once clear and well-defined. Of this kind is Lennartson's eye, and you see well that it can speak in sunshine as well as lightning.

I am glad to have seen and made acquaintance with this man.

St. Orme forms a decided antithesis to him, although he is distinguished in point of the outward man, and has a fund of knowledge, spirit, and experience of life. But there is a something wanting to his character and manner—a something which ennobles the whole. He inspires no confidence, no respect. Besides, he has a certain restless activity of the arm and fingers, which makes you think of a spider, and him disagreeable—at least to me.

How shall I explain to myself Flora's deportment towards these two men? To me it appears certain that she loves Lennartson; but why then coquet with St. Orme? Why accept presents from him? A visitor, who also begins frequently to show himself here, is "the rich young bachelor," my uncle. He is tolerably pleasant and entertaining; and if I were not afraid of appearing conceited, I fain would think that his visits concern—me! He probably regards me as a "*passable souper*." My

stepmother begins to give me this and that significant hint, which I simulate not to comprehend.

Among the guests frequently seen here are also the sisters De P**, a married and an unmarried lady, usually designated "the Ladies of the Board of Trade," who trade very extensively with all in the city in the articles of "people say," "they think," "they know." We practise a little mischievous sport with this matter, but we are no fastidious despisers of the trade we scorn to transact. For the two sisters know a whole host of things, and the maiden is a witty personage, whose large, prying eyes see very keenly and accurately; and her tongue is more amusing than cutting. She has above ninety cousins, almost all of the fair sex, she told me yesterday.

14th Nov.

Yesterday evening I made acquaintance with one of "our intimates," as Selma styles the circle of the family's confidential acquaintances in contradistinction to "our distants." When, as is my custom, I went down into my stepmother's room about half-past seven, Signora Luna was seated in a corner of a sofa, but was visibly on the *wane*, as Selma, too, whispered me on introducing me to her. The handsome Countess greeted me with tolerable indifference, though I liked the "shake" of her warm, silken-soft hand.

The rest of the company comprised the Baron Alexander, a young lieutenant named Ake Sparrsköld, a sister of Flora's, Baroness Bella P**, a widow, and ten years older than Flora, whom we call "The Beauty," and whose features are of the first order, but their expression second-rate;—a nice old lady, Madame Rittersvärd, with her daughter Hellfrid, together with St. Orme and Lennartson.

They spoke about a new French novel, now very much liked, which St. Orme had lent to Flora. St. Orme vaunted the strength with which the characters were drawn, and the boldness and splendour of their colouring. Young Sparrsköld deemed the latter meretricious and the former extravagant. "Each human passion rises at once into frenzy, and loses both bounds and aim; nor can virtue appear elevated without being immediately put on stilts and made to appear unnatural. And the object of the action? Always *unilateral*, narrow motives, always mere selfishness—private, isolated interest. Never aspirations or exertions which embrace the broad interests of humanity." All these imperfections he thought he met with in the entire range of modern French literature.

Lennartson gave a most lively assent.

"And this tendency of the literature in question," said he, "is not only false in itself, it is incorrect as an estimate of the times, and contrary to the noble, and we may indeed say, universal spirit—that spirit which places individual exertions and private welfare in the most intimate connection with the good of the community at large. On the subject of this *public*, this *universal* spirit, young France might take a lesson from old Rousseau. With all their faults his romances are still models for this kind of delineation of social life. You see how the various characters represent the main tendencies of society, and how, when they unite in affection, this love does not resolve into selfishness, but expands, that, in its embrace, it may take in the most hallowed institutions of society, the spirit of humanity and nature in its divine essence; and the home of the private individual—as indeed it should be—stands out as the point from which the great dwelling-place—the world—is to be hallowed and blessed."

St. Orme shrugged his shoulders.

"Poor Rousseau! With all his romances of ideal perfection, he was a mere—visionary," said he, and went and joined Baron Alexander in the large room adjoining.

"I feel that you are right," said I to Lennartson, "but I should so like to see something sterling effected—a step forward in the way of advancing the education of mankind in their important interests; and this French literature, it cannot be denied, exhibits characters and situations in such diversity and depth as we have never before witnessed. It penetrates into all the recesses of our existence, and seizes the moments of all the sufferings, darkness, and dissonance of our lives. True, it is but a 'descent into hell,' but—must not 'an ascension to heaven be at hand'—a transformation by means of which the night of life will be brightened into the most beautiful of its mornings? Is it indeed possible that the highest object this literature could achieve would consist in its return to Rousseau?"

"Yes," rejoined Lennartson, smiling at my warmth, "yes; but only, as I just remarked, in so far as the public, universal spirit is concerned. With you I see, in this literature, the development of decidedly new ideas; and it is not the first time that the people who originated it has paved new ways for the world; but, as yet they are fragmentary, they are but *studies* for a great composition. And one day the master will arise to combine these chaotic elements into a new world. But—perhaps the model for this must first arise, not in romantic, but real life."

"How am I to understand that?" I inquired with strained attention.

"Allow me," pursued Lennartson, "to direct your attention to a leading feature in the polite literature of our day—its tendency to exhibit woman as the point in life from whence emanate quickening and recreating energies. And I confess that I am of this view. At this stage of the world I expect a great deal from—WOMAN."

That the feminine auditory, before whom the Baron spoke these words, looked up to him with esteem and gratitude was only natural. Modest joy sparkled in Selma's beautiful eyes, while in Flora's glance there flashed a something which I would call great.

My stepmother now made a motion that we should go into the saloon and have some music.

Flora called Lennartson to the pianoforte, and played and sang enchantingly to him; at intervals of pause they conversed in an undertone.

I kept to Hellfrid Rittersvärd and Lieutenant Sparrsköld, who, with his honest-looking countenance and open manner of speaking and deporting himself, pleased me especially. We were joined by "The Beauty," who appeared to have determined on making an undying impression on Ake Sparrsköld; but, for the *then* present time, he, like myself, seemed more interested in Miss Rittersvärd.

When I see a young lady so plain as Hellfrid

Rittersvärd, and at the same time so calm in spirit, and of such buoyant sprightly deportment, I conceive a high opinion of her; I feel that the consciousness of greatness of some kind makes her superior to all petty infirmities; she possesses full confidence in what is noble in herself and her fellow-creatures, and thereby, too, calls forth that respect and that healthy tone of mind which overcomes every impediment merely external. I found Hellfrid's conversation entertaining and savoury, and I think that it was the same with Sparrsköld, though "The Beauty" also certainly had her force of attraction for him.

My stepmother played at piquette with her good friend Madame Rittersvärd. This amiable old lady was suffering from a nervous affection of the head, and had come to Stockholm for the purpose of consulting the physicians about it. Her daughter procured her the means for it by translating works of foreign literature, and helped her at the same time to make a provision for two younger brothers: she well merits in earnest the name of "Miss Worthy," which Flora gave her half in derision.

Selma was now here, now in that place, and took a kind interest in all that was going forward.

St. Orme played at cards with the Baron Alexander and Felix Delphin, though he often darted a keen look on Flora and Lennartson, who, while still at the piano, had exchanged music for a low, but eager conversation. This St. Orme broke short by exclaiming:—

"Flora, my excellent Flora! bestow only the fourth part of a thought on me; I am playing quite unluckily this evening, come and help me with your good counsel! tell me, what shall I play—black or red?"

"Black!"

"Black," repeated St. Orme. "Why do you not rather advise red? red, now, is your favourite colour, purple is it not, or am I in the wrong?"

"I do not call to remembrance which," said Flora, with apparent indifference, rising, while a purple colour mounted to her cheeks.

"But I call it to remembrance," pursued St. Orme, "Purple is your colour, and therefore—— gentlemen. Six points in hearts. *That* game I hope to win!" he added, nodding to Flora, who hastily left the room.

Shortly after she returned, but her cheerfulness of temper had vanished, and her vivacity for the rest of the evening was forced.

On St. Orme's taking leave I heard him say to Flora in a half-sneering tone:—

"Thanks for the counsel, dear cousin. I won my game, and with your colour on my heart I hope to win in future."

"Do not rely upon that," said Flora petulantly.

"Defy me not," said St. Orme, in a low tone, half in jest, half in earnest admonition, and he seized her reluctant hand, kissed it, and bowed to her with a smile.—What does this signify?

16th November.

To-day I walked out alone for a long time, and occupied myself with my thoughts. Came home and found visitors, among whom was the Court-Chamberlain; observed several telegraphic signals between my stepmother and him. Flora lives for nothing but her costume and the thoughts of the masked ball at the house of W—'s the minister of state. What toil for one evening. A multitude of projects for balls and other pleasures. I for my part say "no" to all. My expression is, "I am too old to dance."

"Hem—hem—hem!" says my stepmother in courteous opposition. I intend, however, to assist at the New-year's Assembly, inasmuch as I can there get a close view of the royal family.

17th November.

Flowers of the nobler species have what are called nectaries—honey-cups—in which the most precious juices of the plants are preserved; but in order to get at them—when we have not the genius of a drone or a bee, but only unskilful human fingers, we must sometimes *wound* the flower. Human souls too have their nectaries, with which we must frequently deal as with the flowers.

The occasion of this remark was the following:

I found Selma and Flora with my stepmother occupied with reviewing the friends and acquaintances of the house. It was a brisk affair; and the greater number were treated without mercy or forbearance. Flora was keenest, but Selma followed in her footsteps, and my stepmother laughed heartily at the mimicry and caricaturings of the young maidens. I too began to join in the laugh, for the satire was strikingly witty. When, however, they unsparingly handled two worthy persons who, moreover, were heartily attached to the two young people, I felt hurt and grieved at the poison which these young human-flowers, as it were, exhaled in fragrance.

I availed myself of a moment of time just when my step-mother had left the room, to tell them—affectionately however—what I felt.

Both blushed, and Flora said: "I could gather from your silence that you meditated a moral to us; but, my excellent philosopher, if you are bent on preaching, why, do so in the Finnish church, and not in the saloons of Stockholm. There, as everywhere in the great world, it runs: "*tous les genres sont bons, hors le genre ennuyeux.*" Besides, we must laugh and amuse ourselves when we are young. It is time enough to wax serious and still when the years of discretion come; and some day when we girls are old, we shall probably grow just as moral and virtuous as you."

I was silent; for does it avail aught to answer such things? and when my stepmother came in again I went softly out and up into my room. I was inly troubled.

"Selma is not what I believed her to be," thought I, looked up on the twinkling stars that in the evening twilight began to come forth from out the azure depth of the heavens, thought on the bright lights I had seen beaming in her eyes, and was heartily grieved at their obscuration.

But I had not been long alone when I heard light footsteps ascending the stairs. My door was opened, and—Selma threw herself into my arms, and said:—

"Are you very angry with me?"

"Now no longer so, my good Selma," replied I, touched by her tenderness.

"But were you angry with me? you have been

dissatisfied with me, and assuredly more than *once*. Is n't it so ?"

I admitted it was so ; I told her I was afraid that Flora would betray her into ungenerous censoriousness and acerbity, and how it pained me to see dark spots in her soul. I spoke in a serious strain of quizzing in little things, which makes us blind to what is great and conciliatory, and of that tendency of mind which induces us to disparage others in order to exalt ourselves ; in this I became more severe than I had wished, and condemned this bias of the mind as self-sufficiency and the vice of the *Pharisee*.

Selma listened in silence, and became more and more serious and pale.

" You are right," she at length said ; " you are certainly very right. Ah, hitherto I have reflected so little upon myself, and have observed so little vigilance over myself. All have been so kind to me, and have petted me. But you tell me my faults, Sophy ! I will conform accordingly ; I will amend ! "

" But you must not weep, Selma."

" And what imports it if I do weep ? Tears must wash out the unsightly spots from my soul. Do not be uneasy about me, and spare me not, Sophy ! Always tell me the truth as long as you hold me worthy to hear it."

I embraced the good girl cordially, and told her how happy she made me. We then spoke calmly about the difficulty of a middle way in the field of Social Criticism. I acknowledged that it was a hard thing to discover such, and that I, though strictly vigilant over myself, had notwithstanding frequently to reproach myself with sins of the tongue. " An affectionate temper of mind, which should show greater regard to what is essential than what is adventitious in men, might be the safest guide in this. And, besides, the more we advance in knowledge and discretion, the more we prefer to look for a better object on which to exercise our penetration than the defects of our fellow-creatures."

" You give utterance to something," Selma here remarked, " which I have long felt indistinctly. Since the death of my father and preceptor, I have, I fear, retrograded very much. I do not at all know how it is, but my days are spent to no purpose ; I feel them frequently to be such an inanity ; I fear I am sunken. Ah, thanks, Sophy, for rousing me ; but assist me now on to the good way. Help me to occupy myself with things which shall make me better and wiser. You are my elder sister ; do be my friend too."

How willingly did I assent ! We together projected a new way of life ; we laid down our plans for the future, and pursued for a long while a conversation which allowed me insight into a spirit capable of improvement in all that is noblest. That which began so seriously, terminated with equal pleasantry ; I promising, by way of recompense for her lessons in singing and Italian, to teach her *Finnish*, while she vowed she would put my patience strongly to the test, inasmuch as she meant *never* to understand that language.

When Selma was called down to her mother, I felt that I loved her, and that, too, for the entire term of life. Never shall I forget how she stood before me and said :—

" But what imports it if I do weep. Always tell me the truth. I will conform accordingly ; I will amend." And the silent tears on that fine spirited countenance, I would Lennartson had seen and heard her. O indeed there are beautiful things here on earth !

19th November.

Selma was right in her prediction. The evening of the masked ball was spent far more agreeably by us stayers at home, than if we had figured in the finest characters. While Selma was putting the last finish to Flora's toilet, I went down to my stepmother, and found Felix, the Viking, and the Baron with her. The last-mentioned gentleman was little communicative, and frequently turned his eyes towards the door.

When Flora, accompanied by Selma, entered in her superb costume, he appeared struck by her beauty. I was to such a degree, that I was not able to repress an ejaculation of surprise and delight. We were all to some extent captivated, and Selma's beaming eyes went about soliciting praise and sacrifice for the fair Circassian, who stood there proud in the consciousness of her youth, brilliancy, and beauty. Lennartson's admiration, however, soon cooled down, his looks grew serious, and when St. Orme came in splendidly attired in the Turkish costume—he and Flora were to dance together in the quadrille—he suddenly disappeared, without taking leave of any body.

An evident trait of uneasiness mantled Flora's countenance ; but it speedily vanished, and she smiled complacently when St. Orme, amid far-fetched oriental compliments, conducted her to the carriage, in which her sister was waiting for her. The Viking stayed with us ; Felix also remained, though he was to go to the ball.

We talked about Lennartson, and I expressed my joy at the hearty sense of the worth and efficiency of woman, which he had discovered some evenings since. The Viking replied :—

" No one could be found who thinks more highly of woman, but at the same time no one more rigorous in his demands upon her. The admiration and affection with which his mother inspired him, seem to have laid the foundation to this."

My questions elicited many traits and circumstances of the Baron's childhood and youth, which I have grouped together in the following picture :—

His father, General Lennartson, was a man of violent temper and dissolute life. The entire care and education of the children fell upon their mother, a noble and highly accomplished lady, but of a feeble constitution of body.

The eldest son, our Lennartson, had frail health in his youth, and was of an irritable temper. His mother dedicated to him the greatest care, not a blind petting, but a tenderly fostering attention, which, working by affection, invigorates its object. The gentle mother would often sit beside the boy's bed, and relate or read to him about men who, by strength of mind or will, had surmounted their physical infirmities, and become the boast and the benefactors of the people. She would especially dwell on the great men of our native country—those *robust and pious* men that, in the union of these qualities, gave expression to the

fundamental traits of the Swedish national character, when it is true to itself.

The boy listened with eager attention; his mind opened itself to great thoughts; and the soul, invigorated in this manner by those examples of heroism, soon raised up the feeble frame. The latter, too, was strengthened by well-adapted exercises. At the age of fifteen, Lennartson excelled most of his playmates in agility and strength of limb. Soon the mother saw the vivacious spirit springing forth in all its richness, but with all its train of dangers. Young Lennartson, like his father, was of a violent and inflexible temper. The harshness his father exhibited towards his mother excited him to the highest pitch; and this gave occasion to a scene between parent and son, which almost shattered the mother's feeble constitution, but which—strange enough—broke the strength of the harsh husband. He almost feared his son, at least in everything that concerned his mother, and did not again venture to offend against her. This lady, of a St. John-like disposition, had trained up a young eagle that now spread his wings in protection over her. Happy in the affection of her son, but alarmed at the almost formidable character she saw opening in him, she wished to teach the youthful possessor of this strength to command himself, and therefore sought to make him stedfast in that which alone imparts to all power truth, moderation, and a right deportment; namely, true piety. At an early period she had exhibited to her son's view humanity in its greatest forms. Now she endeavoured to convey to the inquiring mind of the youth a clear conception of the spirit and doctrines of that which had already inspired the infantine heart with unconscious affection. In this she proceeded in an entirely different method from that which most parents and teachers pursue. Instead of avoiding those books which are usually held to be perilous to piety, she sought them, read with her son the best-known writings of the Atheists and Deists, from the earliest times up to our own day, and allowed his reason to exercise itself on their tenets, and that doctrine which, IN A PERSONALLY REVEALED GOD, gives the solution of the enigma of our creation; and in this revelation of His nature and the counsels of His will, vouchsafes the only sure and perfectly unimpeachable warranty for the fulfilment of the deepest-seated yearnings and most sacred hopes of men on earth.

With the difficulties that arose in their course she allowed him to contend and, as it were, work his way by his own exertions to the inmost sanctuary of life. *She* it was who raised objections, based on the doctrines of the rationalists; it was he who confuted them. But the joy which flashed from the mother's eyes after difficulties had been felicitously solved, was indeed a secret light to the youth in his investigations.—And while she thus conducted him to an independent and firm point of view, she taught him to entertain respect for his adversaries, to appreciate all inquiries made in an honest spirit, to honour all belief held in sincerity, and to discern the germ of truth even in immature doctrines. Lennartson frequently makes mention of this period as the happiest and most affluent of his life. The affectionate looks and approving words of his parent were to him the most precious reward. She caressed him infrequently as possible, although he often knelt before her in enthusiastic reverence and kissed her hands and dress. Only at times, when she perceived that his young heart was too strongly moved by longing for return of affection, did she suffer him to lean his burning temples upon her bosom, which breathed only for him, but which for a long time past had enfolded the seeds of death in the form of a cruel malady, incurable in almost every instance.

She carefully concealed from her son the pains by which she had been consumed for several years. Not till an operation became necessary did Lennartson learn the sufferings and danger of his mother. She wished to have him removed during the hour of trial, and by an innocent trick sought to deceive him with respect to the time. But he was not to be removed or deceived. It was his arms that held her in the heavy hour; her eyes reposed on his during the operation, and for his sake she bore all without a word of complaining.

And it was permitted her to live three years longer for him, and to enjoy three years' happiness through him. At the expiration of this term the disease appeared again, proving fatal. Speaking of immortality and the certainty of meeting again, and exhorting her son to "patience with his father," she departed resting in his arms.

The effect of this loss on the youth of eighteen years was awful, and ripened him early into manhood. His natural bias at this period, and his love of those studies in which he had had pleasure when young, secretly determined him to go into the church.

While at college—as formerly the greatest of Swedish Statesmen—he had devoted himself by preference to divinity. In this career, however,—also like Oxenstjerna—he was interrupted in order that, agreeably to his father's will, he might enter upon foreign travel. He went to Vienna as secretary to the Swedish embassy, in that city. His fortune there and the talents he displayed were, in conformity to his father's wishes, decisive of his future condition in life; and now for several years past he has succeeded in winning to himself respect and confidence in the diplomatic career.

After my stepmother and the Viking had alternately indicated thus much of Lennartson's life, Selma reminded me of a remark I made on the evening of my arrival, when I first saw him here,—namely, that I had become acquainted with him a long time previously. I was then constrained to relate where and when; which I did in the following manner:

"Some fifteen years since I was present at a dinner, at which General Lennartson and his son also attended. The company, which was large, consisted mostly of the kinsmen and acquaintance of the General. Only a corner of the table separated me from young Lennartson. The distinguised young man was kind enough to maintain a conversation with me—then a timid girl of fourteen—and he related to me the story of Schiller's Wallenstein. In the interest of the narration I forgot both eating and drinking. At table the conversation generally turned upon disturbances which had then recently taken place in the College of Cadets, and they mentioned a young man who had been a ringleader, and guilty of several irregularities, in

consequence of which he was expelled. Some of the guests applied very harsh names to him, calling him, for instance, a "Gallows-bird," &c. Young Lennartson alone undertook his defence, which he did with warmth, and showed how the latter had been provoked in the disputes in question, and that his very aberrations bore traces of a generous heart. The general took the field against his son and grew more and more violent in his sallies against the accused party. Young Lennartson, however, maintained his position, and defended him even against his father, with all due respect certainly, but with great decision. All at once the General burst into frenzy as it were, and turned towards his son with a volley of personal abuse and violent accusations. From the moment the father's attack was made upon the son, the latter was entirely silent. True, his cheek and lips grew rather pale, but he regarded his father with so stedfast a look, and his whole deportment was so calm, that you might almost have deemed him callous to the unworthy treatment. While the regards of all passed with a degree of anxiety from father to son alternately, my eyes lingered with a sort of admiration on the noble features of the latter. They involuntarily remained fixed on a little spot on the smooth, white forehead of the youth; it became greater and greater and more conspicuous; at length it moved and—a clear bead of perspiration ran down and hid itself in the dark eye-lashes. This was the only sign that betrayed his internal conflict.—The General at last was silent for want of words and breath, and for a moment there was a dead silence at table. Young Lennartson was still as the rest; no affectation of indifference or bravado deformed his artless, noble deportment. He appeared to me worthy of admiration for his perfect self-command; and several present seemed to participate with me in this opinion. All, however, showed themselves studious to remove the racking state of excitement by introducing a topic for general conversation. Young Lennartson also bore part in this without constraint, but yet he was more serious than he had been before and—the conclusion of Wallenstein I did not learn."

"Do you remember," the Viking asked me, "the name of the young man, whose conduct gave occasion to this scene?"

"No, I have either forgotten his name or I did not hear it. But I heard some characteristic traits of him,—still fresh in my memory—which exhibited him in the light of an unsteady and violent character."

"And that was the first account you heard of *me!*" replied the Viking in a low but emphatic tone.

I looked up at him with surprise: his eyes were directed on me with an expression of sad seriousness, and I read such dark reminiscences in them that I quickly averted my glance, grieved and almost repenting that I had awakened them."

My stepmother remarked with design: "Lennartson is in truth a rare character, and I could wish all young men would select him as a pattern."

"Yes! who would not wish to be like him?" exclaimed Felix Delphin apparently applying the moral to himself. "Ah if he were only—how shall I say it—a little less superior. But he stands so high that you scarcely venture to approach him. He is—all too faultless."

"Lennartson is as little without faults as any other mortal," said Brenner, "but his imperfections are such as are peculiar to great natures. They prevent him, however, from being happy."

"Is he not happy?" exclaimed Selma, looking up with an expression of sorrow and surprise.

"He is *not* happy," said Brenner, "because he is so seldom satisfied with himself. He has an unceasing thirst which consumes him."

"And that is?" I inquired.

"The thirst after perfection."

We were all silent for a while. Brenner's words and tone had excited us a good deal. At length Felix said:

"It is precisely this greatness in him which depresses and discourages less elevated natures. He imposes rather than inspirits you. I for my part confess that I admire and at the same time ——fear him."

"And yet, Felix," rejoined Selma, "you know he is very good."

"Yes, when I merit it, Selma! And observe, there it is—I frequently do not deserve it and then——Ah, how often when I have been with him, when I have heard and seen him act;—how often have I despised myself for not being like him! And at such times I have uniformly embraced the best resolutions. But when I get into the world again, I forget him and immediately commit foolish things like others and then—I fear him and his look; for this is ever one with my conscience and—condemns me!"

Selma gave her hand to her cousin and regarded him with clear, tearful eyes. Young Delphin was obviously affected, he took hold of Selma's outstretched hand, kissed it several times with warmth, and hastened out of the room. It is impossible that Selma can be indifferent to this amiable young man! Shortly after, the Viking also left in low spirits.

When we were alone, my stepmother gave me the following sketch of Brenner's early circumstances.

William Brenner was distinguished in his youth for a good heart and restless character. At the Royal College of Cadets, he was universally beloved, while his pranks and irregularities both involved him in contentions and brought vexations upon him. He was without firmness, and therefore driven by the impulse of the moment. Various irregularities committed by him exposed him to the severity of the laws; these he opposed with defiance and violence, and was in consequence expelled from Carlberg.* His relations, irritated at his conduct, treated him with harshness and neglect, and by such means excited his passionate spirit to the utmost. He thought himself injured in the face of the whole world, beheld his future prospects blighted, and, in order to blunt the edge of his despair, plunged into wilder excesses than before. When he had dissipated everything he possessed, and burthened himself with more debts than he could meet, he attempted violence upon his own life. But the arm of rescue was extended towards him; he was arrested on the brink of the precipice; and he who saved him was—Thorsten

* Carlberg, the birth-place of Charles XII., is now the seat of the Royal College of Cadets, both for the army and navy.—Tr.

Lennartson. He poured light into the obscured soul of Brenner. He showed him that a future career was still open to him, he made him feel that his destiny was still in his own hands, and that he might win back the respect of society and peace of conscience.

But not merely with words did Lennartson interpose in delivering Brenner from his fate. It was then about the time when the French took the field against the States of Barbary. Lennartson prevailed upon the latter's friends to allow him to take part in that expedition, and assisted him out of his own private purse, then anything but too well furnished.

In projecting this plan Lennartson had formed an accurate judgment of his young friend, and prepared his deliverance.

With vigorous characters it is but *one* step from despair to heroism. Wearing a lock of Lennartson's hair on his breast and with his image deeply graven in his heart, young Brenner rushed upon a career where danger in every variety challenged him. He was concerned not so much in the conquest of nation and lands, he was concerned in regaining honour, in winning again his own, his friends', his country's respect. And for this he hazarded his life with the most cheerful temerity. The young Swede shared the labours and the laurels of the Frenchman. And on the wild waves, before the walls of Algiers, and in the battles with the Arab and the Cabyl on the soil of Africa, the French learned to esteem in him a valour equal (a *greater* is *impossible*) with their own, and love a humanity towards a vanquished foe, with which they are not so familiar.

At a subsequent period Brenner accompanied a party of French *savans* on their perilous journey into the interior of Africa.

After an absence of seven years Brenner again saw his native country. Honour and esteem awaited him there. He soon found other opportunities to signalise himself as a naval officer, and rose rapidly in the service.

The first use Brenner made of the money he acquired in the war was to pay the debts he had incurred at home. On his return he was no longer under pecuniary obligations to any one — no, there were no claims either upon his purse or property. But yet there was a claim upon his heart, and this he longed to satisfy. On leaving his country he had left behind him a poor young maiden of noble sentiments and of obscure but honourable parentage, whom he passionately loved and who entertained as strong an affection for him. He solemnly vowed to return and make her his partner. But years passed away. It was but seldom that a dove flew from torrid Africa to cloudy Europe, bringing consolation to the lonely heart. Poverty, grief, and sickness wrought a terrible change in the blooming young maiden. She saw it, grew alarmed at her own condition, and, like the sick bird that seeks a dark spot in the wood in which to die, she withdrew from the world, and resolved to be dead for him she loved.

He sought her, however, and found her. But he could hardly recognise her again. Only by the love which, at sight of him, spoke in look as in voice did he perceive that she was still the same and faithful to him. He pressed her to his bosom and seized her hand to lead her to the altar. But she refused. Ah, she was indeed so faded, so poor, so joyless. She could not but burthen his life, follow him like a shadow on his sunny career. She would prefer to abide in her obscurity. From its shades she could still rejoice at the radiance which surrounded him.

Thus she spoke in the earnestness of a guileless heart; and while he perused this volume she became dearer to him than ever. And he spoke to her of following him in lands beneath a fairer sky, of fresh flowers on foreign shores of greater beauty, of the refreshing breeze and waves of the ocean, dangers they would share with each other, the omnipotence of love, and of a new existence. She listened to him; her spirit was recreated, her heart restored to vigour, she had faith in and followed him.

And on the cheeks which indigence and grief had blanched, Brenner imprinted his kisses, the sea-breeze breathed its freshness. Under these influences she thrived again. When, after sojourning several years abroad, he returned to his native country, she was blooming in the enjoyment of health and happiness.

While Brenner's marriage was talked of, there were heard several voices to disapprove and dissuade; several, too, were raised in approbation, and none more warmly than Lennartson's. From that time forward he and Brenner were inseparable in the most essential interests of their lives, and still love each other as brothers—seldom love.

"Why have I not seen Brenner's consort here?" I inquired of my stepmother, deeply moved by the narration I had just heard.

"Why?" exclaimed my stepmother, smiling and rather surprised. "For a very cogent reason. She died three years ago. The birth of her last child cost her her life."

I sat there astonished and almost terrified.

My stepmother then spoke of the fine qualities of the deceased, and expatiated a little over the fact of her (my stepmother) having extended her patronage to her, and having introduced her into "society," into which she otherwise could not easily have gained admission, on account of which Brenner ever felt and evinced towards her such "unspeakable gratitude," &c.

I inquired whether he had greatly bewailed the loss of his domestic companion.

"Almost to frenzy!" answered my stepmother. "For an entire year he could scarcely bear the sight of his children. Now, however, they are his greatest joy. And sweet and amiable children they are—three boys and two girls."

Midnight had approached during this narration, which awoke so many beneficent emotions in me. The Countess G. had promised to escort Flora home to us, and herself pass a little hour in our society, to relate about the glorious things of the ball, provided we would sit up with hot coffee for her till three o'clock in the morning.

My stepmother, who is delighted with everything lively and amusing, had promised this; and while Selma and I, continuing the conversation about our two heroes, made giant-strides in our Christmas presents, the morning hour came on unobserved. Signora Luna and Flora came, too; and now ensued a zealous drinking of coffee and a discussion on the subject of the ball. It was magnificent, and Flora one of the most brilliant

stars, but—but it was with this magnificent ball as with so many others; it was *too hot* and *too crowded*. The great quadrille in which Flora danced had not had room enough allowed it to appear as it ought to have appeared; those who were to figure in it could not be seen to advantage; they were pretty much overlooked and confounded with the crowd; in a word, people had *not* been entertained.

"St. Orme was, among the gentlemen, the one who made the most important figure in his costume," said the Countess G.; but added, that he was "rather too much of a Turk." Especially towards Flora, he allowed himself a certain Sultan-like despotism. "Perhaps," she continued, roguishly, "his envoyship meant thus to hold all the poor attachés at a respectful distance."

Flora was the first that intimated a wish to retire to rest; and while I went to awake her sleeping Abigail, she ascended the steps leading to our chambers. Upon my coming up, too, shortly after, I found her standing at a window in the corridor, and looking out pensively upon the night-scene, which was lighted up by the faint moon-beams. As she did not seem to regard me, I lightly touched her arm, and said—"Where is your native place, fair masker?"

"Where?" answered the fair Circassian, in a strange tone of voice; "why, in the wilderness, where John fed on locusts and wild honey, and clothed himself in camel's hair. Ah! who would not be there, far from this world, far from one's self!"

"Flora, you are in a wayward mood," I was going to add; but Flora interrupted me, and said:—

"*Yes, what am I?* I would thank him who should tell me what I am. What I *was*, that I do know."

"And what *were* you?"

"A being endowed with the richest, brightest talents which might have been—But what boots it to talk of what I might have been? What I *shall* be, I now begin to see pretty distinctly."

"Assuredly you can still become what you wish to be," I replied.

Without seeming to regard these words, Flora pursued pensively and with acrimony—

"Have you read in the fables of people who were transformed by malignant witchcraft into lycanthropists, or man-wolves, and assumed the malignant nature of those who enchanted them."

"Yes," I answered; "but I have read also that the Christian name of those bewitched, when pronounced by the voice of affection, has power to dissolve the spell, and deliver the unhappy victims."

"Who will call me in such wise? Who loves me in such a manner? Nobody! nobody!" exclaimed Flora; "nor do I merit it. I am—not good. I am——but no matter what I am; no one will be the wiser for it. Hate me with all your might, Sophy. In that you act most wisely. No! don't look so tragical. I'll still laugh at you, at myself, at the whole world."

Flora did laugh, but the laugh came not from the heart.

Anna, her maid, was now come up.

"Will you not this once let Anna go to rest again, and accept my services as your maid? I do not think I am entirely destitute of skill in——"

"No! no! my excellent Madame Philosophy!" exclaimed Flora laughing, "I won't venture to do that, although I make you a profound reverence for the honour of the offer, and thank you very much. I would rather see my needles in Anna's hands than yours, though she now looks like one of the five silly virgins. Anna! don't fall upon the light! You are the veriest drowsy-head in all Stockholm! Can't you keep your eyes open for a quarter of an hour in the night? Look at me! I have been awake the whole night, and am still so lively."

"Yes, I do not doubt that," answered Anna peevishly. "Miss has been amusing herself and dancing, but——"

"If nothing else is wanting, you shall dance before me in the room, in order to rouse you up."

In the midst of this dialogue, Miss and attendant vanished into Flora's chamber, and I entered mine. But I could not sleep for a long time; Lennartson and his mother, the Viking and his wife, rose vividly before my soul; and then Flora, with her odd, fantastical confessions. My imagination was still busied with the subject during sleep, and the fair Circassian and lycanthropists and locusts were jumbled most singularly together in my dreams.

21st November.

A new revolution in Flora; fresh light shed on Selma; uncertain glimpses of certain obscurations; *signs of the times;* a conversation between my stepmother and me.

Felix Delphin's comrades and friends, Mr. Rutschenfelt and Mr. Skutenhjelm, or "the Rutschenfelts," as they are collectively called, under the escort of St. Orme and Felix, paid rather an unexpected visit to us to-day. The object of their polite errand was to invite us to a large sledge party which they had arranged, and which was to take place on the Sunday following. Felix wished to drive Selma; St. Orme invited Flora to share his large sledge. The latter vehicle was to be dressed with tiger-skins, and drawn by a couple of spirited dappled-greys, that Flora had already seen and admired very much. This sledge was to lead the van, which was to pass through the principal streets of the city on to the Zoological Gardens in the environs, where they proposed dining, and afterwards dancing, &c.

Flora accepted the offer with evident delight, and clapped her hands. She exclaimed—"Ah! I know of nothing more divine than the tiger-skins and fiery chargers! It will be a gloriously amusing trip!"

But Selma whispered her suddenly—"Do not consent! I pray you. Think of Lennartson."

"Well, and what then?" answered Flora impatiently.

"He would not wish it. At all events, defer a decisive answer for a while."

"Ah! always difficulties and impediments, when I have a wish for anything!" said Flora, stamping her foot a little, and her complexion heightened from ill-humour.

In the meantime Rutschenfelt had turned to my stepmother and Skutenhjelm to me, with an overture to be our conductors. I looked at my

stepmother, and my stepmother looked at me; and this once we were in harmony, for we both answered evasively, and begged for time to consider about a definitive answer. While we all stood there irresolute and almost declining the invitation, the spirit of defiance entered Flora, and she said with decision — "Others may do as they please, but I intend going, and St. Orme has my promise."

"That was brave!" said he, "and I hope the other ladies will follow so good an example. This evening I will come, in order to obtain a more decisive answer."

Scarcely had St. Orme left, and "the Rutschenfelts," with Felix, turned off the steps, when Lennartson entered. He soon learned from my stepmother the question we had been discussing.

"And what answer did Flora give?" said he drily and with haste, turning to her.

"I have promised to accompany St. Orme," answered Flora, though visibly not with a good conscience. "I knew no reason why I should forego so innocent a pleasure."

"I am sorry," said Lennartson, gently but earnestly; "but I must beg you to abstain from it."

"I am sorry, Lennartson," said Flora with defiance, "that I cannot fulfil your wish. I have already given my promise to St. Orme, and my respected guardian will assuredly not compel me to break my plighted word."

"In this case I must insist upon your retracting a precipitate promise. I have my reasons for this, which I do not wish now to tell. In a word, Flora durst not accompany St. Orme!"

"*Durst* not?" exclaimed Flora, her eyes flashing fire. "And who can prohibit me?"

"I," said Lennartson calmly, but with determination.

There was a time when I thought I could never hear a man's word of authority to a woman, without my heart swelling in my bosom with hatred and acrimony. But at the moment in question I heard such a sentence pronounced, and was unruffled! I felt the full force of a *noble* authority. Flora felt it too. She said nothing, but went quietly aside to a window. Lennartson conversed a good while with my stepmother and me, as if nothing had occurred. When I again looked at Flora, she sat knitting in the same place; she was pale, serious, and transformed as it were into a different being. After awhile, Lennartson went and seated himself opposite to her at the window. He took her half-reluctant hand, and his eyes strove to meet hers. But she only cast them down the more lowly upon her work. Suddenly two bright tears trickled down. Upon this, Lennartson whispered—

"Flora!"

She raised her head, and looked at him with eyes radiant with affection.

Lennartson gazed at her seriously, but with visible emotion.

"Flora!" he again said, "how shall I interpret your demeanour?"

"Can you not rely upon me, not have faith in me, although you do not understand me?" she answered.

He made no reply, but kissed her hand repeatedly. Again were several words interchanged between them, which I did not hear. Upon Lennartson's rising, a tear moistened his eye. He bowed to us in silence and withdrew.

Flora sat a long time moveless, with her countenance buried in her pocket-handkerchief. I thought she was deeply affected. But she suddenly raised her head, and exclaimed—

"Ah! I only regret the tiger-skins and the fiery chargers. I should have been as in a triumphal procession. I should have put on my new bright-red fur dress, and bonnet with the white plumage. It would certainly have looked enchantingly beautiful!"

Selma regarded her with a half-amazed, half-sorrowful expression, as if she would say—

"How can you think of such things now?"

Flora remarked this, and exclaimed—

"Look you, little Selma, don't you ape Sophy, and look like a litany at my little sallies. To feel pleasure in that which is beautiful and splendid, is what I cannot alter; and a little enjoyment in life I will have, if I am to live. Ah! a sunny, gay existence, is a glorious thing! Take two goblets, pour into one the bitter draught of denial, and into the other youth, vigour, health, pleasure, fruition—and I challenge even you, wise Philosophy, not to grasp at the latter. O! I will drink out of it, quaff it to the dregs!"

"And therein," said I, "will find precisely the most bitter of that which you turned away from in the former vessel. For my part, I will have a purer joy than—mere mirth, a better draught wherewith to refresh myself than—pleasure."

"Give me," exclaimed Flora, "pleasure, enjoyment. Let me be joyous, joyous, joyous! and then let me die. Such is the language of a candid being."

"But not of a rational one," said I smiling.

"And who told you that I was a rational being?" exclaimed Flora petulantly, waltzing a few turns round the room. "Perhaps I am not even a human being! Perhaps I am one of those creatures the Oriental legends speak of, that hover between heaven and hell, without being able to become inmates of either, and who therefore flit about on earth as shining, delusive meteors. And —perhaps it is better thus to dance than, like you others, perplex the spirit with inquiries about that concerning which nobody attains to any certainty. Come, dear Selma, let us waltz. Play us one of Strauss's, Sophy, the wilder the better."

I played and the two young ladies waltzed, which was just as well as then to talk rationally with Flora; and perhaps we waltz ourselves into calmness sooner than we can effect it by reasoning.

At the bottom of all Flora's sallies lay internal disquietude. The whole day through she was in a high-wrought, variable temper of mind, and seemed desirous to avoid returning to calmness and reflection.

In the afternoon St. Orme came in, and Flora started at sight of him.

"How will it be with our sledge party?" was his first inquiry.

With an assumed calmness she begged to be excused for being obliged to retract the promise to make one of his party. A previous pledge, a —another engagement which she had forgotten this morning prevented her——"

St. Orme listened, with a dark expression and

arch smile upon his thin lips, to the excuse she made. He then drew near, and said in a low voice—

"May we inquire *what* promise it is which prevents you fulfilling that which was given to me? But perhaps you have forgotten that too?"

"It may be so," said Flora, with *nonchalance* and pride.

"Such oblivion never occurs to me," said St. Orme, in a low but emphatic tone of voice. "I have a good memory—which I can prove by what I wear on my breast."

On saying this he threw his waistcoat back a little, and I saw something glitter, which at a hurried glance appeared to me like a purple-coloured silk ribbon. A brighter purple, however, heightened Flora's complexion. She clenched her hand convulsively, and exclaimed in a bitter tone of voice, turning suddenly from St. Orme to me—

"How happy are men! With weapon in hand, they can demand satisfaction or revenge. Ah! would that I were a man."

"Would you in that case combat with me, my fair cousin?" St. Orme asked with a smile. "Should we fight a duel?"

"Yes!" cried Flora vehemently, "a mortal one."

"It is a fortunate thing, then, for me," he pursued in a tone of derision, "that you are only a woman. And therefore I advise you to employ no other weapons against me than your beautiful eyes. To them I am prepared to surrender myself captive. Adieu, Flora! adieu, Sophy! I wish you much pleasure this evening."

It was a subscription night, and Flora and Selma were going to the Opera with Mrs. Rittersvärd and her daughter, where they would occupy my stepmother's box. The latter felt a "little fatigued" and did not wish to drive out. I promised Selma (seeing that I, at all events, should stay at home) to keep her company and *amuse* her.

"And listen, sweet angel," Selma roguishly whispered before driving off, "Don't be too Christian in evincing your love of justice towards the Gyllenlöfs and Silfverlings in the event of the conversation turning upon them. Such spasmodic acquaintances can bear a little of what is bitter and high seasoned."

I promised to be pungent towards them, and requested an explanation of the terms "spasmodic acquaintances," but she answered, "How is it possible not to understand them. O golden innocence!" And, smiling, she abandoned me to my ignorance.

When alone with my stepmother I observed that we were both charged with abundant matter for a weighty conversation, and that we desired nothing more ardently than to meet together.

"It is remarkable," we both began at the same time, as soon as we had seated ourselves by the evening lamp. (N. B. We begin our political discussions constantly with: "It is remarkable," "It is strange," "It is quite inconceivable," or some similar phrase to excite attention; when we are about to introduce some reflections on the questions of the day. And as my stepmother and myself, in consequence of our different political tendencies, take in papers of opposite colours, we make it matter of importance to ourselves, that, when we have lighted upon some really impressive remark or phrase therein, to astonish each other with it; nay, sometimes by such a stroke to get possession of the field entirely,—all in the most friendly spirit, of course.—This is growing into a frightfully long parenthesis!—Now, in my paper of that day I had read some remarkable things about the progress of the industrial arts, and particularly noted a pithy sentence on this mighty matter. My "It is remarkable," then was an introduction to this sentence. Now the parenthesis is closed at last.) Hearing my stepmother begin with the same words, I yielded, with due respect, precedence to her "remarkable," when it appeared that this was not the "Industralism of the day," but "some people's" want of spirit and delicacy, of which my stepmother had that very day had a "remarkable" proof.

I conjectured that the Gyllenlöfs were coming, and they did come in point of fact, and the Silfverlings with them. We deplored the former family's want of education and good breeding, their vanity and arrogance, and we laughed at the latter on account of their awkward affectation and their assuming an air of distinction. "The poor people did n't know any better," we said. "It was pitiable as ridiculous," we also remarked.

From them we passed to other friends and acquaintances, and dealt out fortune and misfortune to different people. We effected a slight change in the nervous affection of Mrs. Rittersvärd, making it to partake more of apoplexy, detracted a little from the attractions of "The Beauty," and were at pains to determine Sparrsköld's choice between beauty and virtue, that is to say, Flora's sister and Hellfrid Rittersvärd.

My stepmother was very desirous, for the sake of her good friend, Mrs. Rittersvärd, that the daughter might marry well, and Lieutenant Sparrsköld was a clever young man and had good prospects. My stepmother believed, notwithstanding this, that Beauty would triumph. I hoped Virtue would be victorious, and we laid a wager upon the subject.

While occupied with the disposing of friends and kindred in this manner, I endeavoured imperceptibly to approach our own family, in order to hear my stepmother's thoughts concerning the signs and motions which then occurred within it. With a view to this, I made known some of my observations on St. Orme, Flora, and Lennartson, and the singular connection which subsisted between them.

My stepmother listened with strained attention, and put some hasty questions; but instead of opening her views to me, she at once retired within the stronghold of secrecy, and, with an air which had been worthy of a Prince Metternich himself, she remarked, "You may be convinced, my excellent Sophy, that I see all that is going on about me too well, though I will not express myself or interfere in the business before I——"

Here was the commencement of the diplomatic concoction. I swallowed this and a little chagrin to boot. My stepmother then turned unexpectedly towards me with reflections on my condition in life, and certain insidious questions whether I would alter it, if a fit, *a good match* offered—as, for instance, an elderly, steady man of good cha-

racter, repute, property, and education, and who could offer me a good "*état.*"

A little mortified at my stepmother's omniscience and reserve, I thought, "If you will play the part of Prince Metternich, I will represent Prince Talleyrand;" and instead of answering the inquiries of my stepmother, I delivered myself of a warm eulogium upon liberty and the emancipation of woman. At this my stepmother grew quite warm, and, without understanding what I really meant, declared her hostility to all emancipation. I wished to explain my meaning, but she—as was my own case at bottom—desired merely to hear herself, and in this manner we emulated each other in talking loudest with some degree of rudeness.

The return of the ladies from the Opera interrupted us. They came accompanied by Lennartson, young Sparrsköld, and Felix. Signora Luna and her "Caro Sposo" augmented our evening party. After giving in their report of the Opera, they were initiated into the dispute at issue between my stepmother and myself. We agreed to decide the contest during supper, at which it was pursued with undissembled zeal. All spoke on the subject, Selma excepted. I had Ake Sparrsköld and Signora Luna on my side. Rittersvärd and the Great Alexander held with my stepmother. The latter was very unpleasantly affected, and winked very much on my mentioning Thorild and quoting certain sentences which may be read in the Fourth Part of his Complete Works, page 84, and which certain ladies and gentlemen would do well to ponder a little.

For a long time Lennartson merely took a facetious part in the conversation, and amused himself with demolishing the arguments of both parties, but especially of mine, by sallies of wit. Being, however, at last seriously challenged by me "to be pleased to understand me," he gave expression to some serious, explanatory remarks —some of those words of great good sense which are sweeter to hear than the most beautiful music. I felt pleasure in preserving them for a future session of the diet.

With these words the discussion terminated. Baron Alexander G. was, however, apparently dissatisfied with the sentiments they expressed. I drew this conclusion from the answer he made to his wife's proposal to invite the Baron to dine with them some day in the week when they saw company. To her solicitation he rudely replied in the negative; and on her remonstrating with him in a tone of entreaty, he said, "But, my dear friend, *I* will not have it so. It is for *you* to propose, for *me* to decide. And I have now decided with respect to this matter. And there 's an end of it."

The Countess G. was silent, but a cloud passed over her countenance.

I should be but little surprised if she become a radical on the question of emancipation.

When we had separated this evening, Selma (as is often her wont) followed me with the candle into my room. Here I rallied her for not having supported my motion this evening, and taxed her with being entirely destitute of "*esprit de corps.*"

She rebutted the charge with a laugh, but remarked, that for her part she had not yet experienced the want of an emancipation. "I have," she said, "always been able to look up to those who have had authority over me. You know how kind my mother is towards me; that she desires nothing but my happiness, and does everything to secure it. And my father! O how happy I was in loving him, obeying him, and conforming myself in all things to his wishes. And after his death—" She paused suddenly and blushed.

"Well? After his death?"

"Then I became acquainted with and looked up to another man—"

"Oh, oh!" thought I, and light shone in upon me.

"Is it permitted me to pronounce the name of the gentleman?" I asked, not without a mischievous expression of countenance; "is it permitted me to name Lennartson?"

With great seriousness, but with a secret tremor in her voice, Selma pursued:

"It will ever be subject of rejoicing to me, that in him I have made acquaintance with the noblest and best man on earth. May, oh may Flora make him happy! For my part, I could wish merely to be his sister, his friend, and have a right to be about him, to serve him, and in any way to minister to his happiness. May he be happy—may he be happy with Flora!"

"And you, my Selma, shall I not see you happy with——"

"With no man, no man!" she interrupted me with warmth. "But I have my mother and you, Sophy. I will live for you and the rest who are dear to me. It is so sweet to love. But my mother will surely think I am spell-bound here. Good night, dear, good, wise, most excellent Sophy."

She kissed me with affection and cheerfulness; and on the stairs I heard her trilling to vacancy "Clärchen's Song," from Göethe's Egmont:

"Happy alone is the heart that loves."

23rd Nov.

Poor Felix! He loves Selma tenderly, and fears she does not reciprocate the attachment. He is unhappy—dissatisfied with himself and the entire world. He entreats me to be his friend, his sister. How willingly would I be such! His warm heart and his confidence have mollified me for him, but—but—

24th Nov.

I feel with more and more distinctness that I here stand on volcanic ground, which fermenting passions make interesting, but at the same time perilous. For who can say of what kind the explosion will be; whether it will produce merely an atmospherical phenomenon of some magnitude or lay waste blooming landscapes. If, on my young sister's account, my heart were not too deeply staked in the game, I should calmly and with pleasure contemplate these scenes of human life, and the development and results of these partially mysterious connections.

Ah, it is indeed well when the period of youth is past, and the more quiet years are coming on. It is well when the wild conflict of the feelings subsides; but well, too, that it has *taken place;* for it has produced a world. And on the surface of this world a new Spirit now moves with fresh life—the quiet Spirit .of *Thought*, that lays his cooling hand upon our heated brow, separates

darkness from light, and bids the eye "Be clear," and life "Be calm!"

In the evening of the same day.

What is this? Surely the rage for Love and Romance in our home here will not, for all the world, prove contagious! And is it with certain affections of the heart as with the nocturnal revels of the Scotch Willis, that they draw those who approach them into their circles, and compel them to join in their dancing? But no! In the name of free agency it shall not become thus with me. And, therefore, I will—instantly depose my confessions to myself.

Full of those becalming and serene thoughts I had written down in the morning, I went to take a walk. I feel great pleasure in strolling about Stockholm, and there looking around me. In what a variety of shapes does life move about in a great city, how many gifts and tendencies are here embodied in human forms, and peer forth in peculiar, distinct physiognomies. I like to contemplate these little worlds, to think about them, how they can all be attracted and lighted by the same sun; I like to speak to them, and let them answer me.

Primitive is the epithet applied in the national poem of the Fins—*Kalewala*—to those words by virtue of which Spirits sway each other and the incorporeal elements of nature; and these words seem to be the *very essence* of things themselves—the mystery of their inmost being. When they are addressed or adjured with such words they must answer, they must obey.

There is a deep, beautiful truth in this. But *primitive words* you do not find (either in the above poem or in reality) just when you choose. You must be in a particular temper of mind.

This day was peculiarly propitious to life and contemplation; for the alternation of light and shade made the different parts of the city to stand out in varying and vivid contrast. I was more than ever affected by the individual beauty of Stockholm; historical recollections rose like crowned spirits above the seven holms (rocks) on which the city is built; I fancied I heard the song of the *Saga* in the wind, and the roaring of the waves about these shores, which, from a multitude of deeds both good and bad, great actions and great sufferings, are replete with poetical associations.

Once I saw a capital city without any towers, or any edifices surpassing the rest in point of beauty and magnitude; all were nearly equal, the one to the other, and people said they were a genuine picture of society as it should be. But no! It did not present a true reflection of society. When a nation has arrived at consciousness of its entire existence, it must attest this in its cities and buildings; temples must rear their flaming spires to the clouds; magnificent palaces (not private houses) must betoken the consciousness of greatness in a noble, public spirit; statues must stand there in remembrance of great men; beauty in a diversity of forms must give evidence of what is good in the political community.

But whither is my rambling pen leading me? My feet led me this once towards the south, high among the mountains, and thence down to the strand and into a wherry, in it to be rowed back to the north.

I had just caught sight of a man coming out of one of the hovels on the beach, followed to the door by a pale, elderly woman, who gave him her blessings; and now I saw him with hurried pace pass down the steps leading to where the boat lay. On my descending, he turned round and with a joyous "Ah!" and two outstretched arms he dexterously assisted me into the boat, taking his place at the rudder. It was the *Viking*. I felt pleasure in having met him, especially when I remarked that his dark blue eyes rested upon me with the same expression as on the evening of our first acquaintance. I was warm from walking; the wind had blustered rather wildly among my locks; I knew that I looked well, and that the Viking thought so. A certain complacency of spirit and body, the low plashing of the waves around us, the mild air, the luxuriant spectacle round about, Brenner's presence,—all inspired me with a sense of an enhanced existence, which made me involuntarily give free expression to the thoughts and impressions that had animated and still animated me. Brenner listened to me with obvious interest and pleasure; when, however, I expressed the wish that men might come more and more to view life in the light of abstract conception and *live* in clear thought, he shook his head and said:

"Knowledge and philosophy cannot improve men, and can contribute but little to their real happiness. The feelings of the heart alone give fulness and value to life. The pure atmosphere of thought appears to me like the air on Mont Blanc; on its heights you will see the stars of greater magnitude, and have the clouds at your feet, but you cannot breathe, and life is soon extinguished for want of vital sustenance."

I replied: "The vivacity of thought does not exclude that of the feelings, but it controls it and prevents its gaining the ascendancy. Reason emancipates men from much suffering."

"Reason!" exclaimed the Viking, "I would hear nothing of a reason which is fatal to the best life of the soul, which is to prevent men from suffering. Without *suffering*, life has no great value."

I felt struck at the feeling in these words, and especially the glance and the tone of voice in which he pronounced them; but I replied notwithstanding:

"There is so much irrational, aimless suffering; so many painful feelings without sense or significance."

"Ah!" rejoined Brenner, "much that appears irrational is at the bottom good, if for naught else, yet to destroy that selfishness which makes us so anxious about our individual persons, so calculating, so rigidly prudent that we grow—abominable. Feelings without sense or significance! It is precisely such that please me. Who, for instance, talks about sensible love? And yet love is the noblest of the heart's feelings, its fairest flower! I for my part am not sensible, never have been, and never shall be, I hope."

Smiling and in a sprightly manner, I disputed his assertion, and would not hear of any but a *sensible* love. The Viking expressed himself warmly against this, but in an agreeable, handsome manner.

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On coming to land at Loogarden, Brenner offered me his hand to assist me out of the boat, saying, "Do not be angry with me for my want of understanding, Miss Adelan. I will see if I can amend."

"Perhaps in future we shall better understand each other," said I, with a light air and kindly.

"Thanks for those words! Yes, may it be so!" answered the Viking, pressing my hand.

What does all this import? And why must I feel complacency in pleasing this man, with whom I have so slight an acquaintance? No, cousin Flora! it is not coquetry, at least no blameworthy desire to please; and *if* for a moment it has been such, I will take care that it be not so in future. For to wish to appear agreeable to those people whom we find agreeable is neither sinful nor morbid, but a befitting and courteous disposition. It is the basis of all that renders social intercourse charming and easy. But love to mankind must not degenerate into——

25th November.

Worse and worse! on coming to shore yesterday I expressed my delight in a bouquet of the Narcissus tribe of plants which they were carrying by. To-day these flowers exhaled their fragrance in my room. They were accompanied by a billet from the Viking.

What then? are not flowers symbols of well-wishing and friendship? in such a light I will regard these flowers.

29th November.

The Baroness Bella B., "The Beauty," and Hellfrid Rittersvärd as visitors. Subsequently Ake Sparrsköld, Felix, and others. "The Beauty" expressed herself (very *mal à propos*, it seemed to me) on the unpleasantness and misfortune of plainness of person. She "heartily commiserated ugly people," but they ought at all events to *know* that they are ill-favoured, and not show themselves in the society of the world, where their mere appearance would occasion disagreeable feelings.

I was nettled at this discourse, which was obviously intended for Hellfrid Rittersvärd, whose calm, classic bearing I was constrained to admire at that moment. She merely cast a quiet look of resignation at the cruel Beauty, and said with gentleness: "Since it is not the fault of the plain that they are plain, it is venial in them if they mingle with their fellow-creatures in a feeling of confidence that they will, precisely on account of their misfortune, evince kindness and indulgence towards them; if the matter must be viewed in so serious a light."

This was spoken with uncommonly noble emphasis, and I designed answering with equal ardour of feeling, when young Sparrsköld forestalled me by exclaiming:—

"I cannot comprehend that importance which many people attach to external beauty or plainness. I am of opinion that a sound education, at least that which has religion for its basis, must inspire a noble serenity, a healthful tone of coolness, or indifference—or whatever people may call it—about the possession or want of such mere outward gifts. And who has not already experienced what a matter of indifference they are in reality as far as the woe or weal of life is concerned? who has not experienced how, upon a closer acquaintance, plainness may appear handsome, and beauty deformed, according to the condition of the soul and the heart? and hence it is that I believe the absence of external beauty should never trouble a generous nature, or be deemed a misfortune. This want can never prevent people from being beloved and amiable to the highest degree, and of this we have daily proofs."

I could have embraced the young man for these words, which made "The Beauty" vastly plain, by occasioning an expression of chagrin to appear on her countenance, while subdued joy diffused as it were the brightness of beauty over Hellfrid's features. Ake Sparrsköld had never appeared handsomer to me than at that moment: at a more advanced part of the evening he sang. He has a very pleasing voice. I said so to Miss Rittersvärd, who acquiesced, but so drily, that I could have thought her cold if I had not perceived by her glance that her feelings were but too ardent.

1st December.

Visiting and amusement! Rutschenfelts and company together with a conversation which turned upon Gyllenlöf's *soiréés*, splendid apartments, furniture, &c., and the delectable dinner of the newly-married couple O—sköld. What wine! what dainties! St. Orme gave the key, and Felix and his friends took up the strain. Among these, a young Captain Rummel (Ake Sparrsköld's superior officer) especially distinguished himself, and whom the young gentlemen seemed to regard with a sort of admiration, but also with a certain degree of envy. His domestic arrangements were described as a pattern of "comfort" and "elegance," and lauded as a model of a household for bachelors. They spoke especially of his bed-room, his costly toilet, and the portrait of himself which was suspended above his bed. (It appeared to me like a little idolatrous temple for *his own self*, and hence I felt a kind of contempt rise within me.) Farther his connoisseurship in the delicacies of the table was extolled. But on this article he yielded the palm to the Court Chamberlain, who accepted it with modesty, remarking that though in Sweden people were rather "*gourmand*" than "*gourmet*," yet *he* ranged himself among the former class. Felix coincided with him in the sentiment that in roast veal there were only *three mouthfuls* that were really eatable. At last they began to project a sort of picture of what at the then present time was required for a comfortable way of life. (Yet I suspect, from what I know of certain *liaisons* of Captain Rummel's, that certain conditions of this comfortable way of life were passed over in silence purely on account of the ladies present.) Felix sighed deeply at the enumeration of the sums of money which were found to be necessary to gratify all such wants.

Meanwhile, Lennartson, who sat at some distance, had occupied himself with the perusal of several newspapers; but I was internally convinced that he heard everything which was said in the room. All at once he exclaimed, approaching the company with a smile:—

"We have here, too, a picture of the wants of a human being, that is tolerably original. Will the gentlemen bestow any attention on it?"

And from a newspaper he held in his hand he read aloud the following article from Hernösand :

"The learned mathematician Lector Aurén, died in this place in the course of last month,* at the age of eighty-one years. He was the author of several works of erudition, among which were some on the chronology of the Bible which he published at his own expense. Notwithstanding this, he saved from the slender income on which he had to live, and which in the latter years of his life he shared with an assistant, the sum of 8000 riks-daler. This of course, could not have been effected but by the complete denial of all earthly enjoyments and comforts. To what an extent he carried these sacrifices is evidenced by the fact that his needy dwelling-place, even in the most rigorous season, was neither heated nor lighted. When darkness came on he would lay himself on his bed, and make the stars—which were sufficient society for him—a subject of calculation, or, when the sky was clear, a theme of meditation. That he was not urged to this by any sordid selfishness is proved as well by the relief which during his life he secretly afforded to many indigent persons, as the noble manner in which he disposed of the property he bequeathed. Four thousand eight hundred riks-daler he has appropriated for two stipendia. A possession in the city he has given to an aged man, whose wife of late years nursed him with tender and careful attention. The remaining part of his property falls to his indigent kindred."†

When Lennartson had ended, a brief silence ensued in the room. Selma's clear glances were riveted on the reader, while his eyes rested on Felix.

Then a low murmur arose. "Ah well! an anchorite, a hermit——but in this manner people cannot live if they abide in society, if they mean to pass their lives with their fellow-men."

"That I admit," replied Lennartson ; "but the question is whether Lector Aurén's system is not better fitted to gain peace and happiness during a long life on earth, than that which was set up just now in this room."

"I would prefer dying to-morrow," cried Felix, "before dragging on a long existence destitute of all human joys."

"And I," exclaimed Skutenhjelm, "would rather send a bullet through my head the day after to-morrow, than doom myself to lie in cold and darkness ten years through. If we are to be buried it is better to die before the rite is performed."

"You forget," said Lennartson smiling, "that Aurén saw the stars beaming above him, and at all events had more pleasure in them than we in the wax tapers of our saloons. And as to human joys," he pursued, regarding Felix as he spoke, "I am sorry that a young man will not comprehend *that* joy which Aurén had—the joy of being actively useful—the joy of well-doing."

There was something so earnest in Lennartson's look and tone while he pronounced these last words, that Felix was visibly affected by them. Tears forced themselves into his eyes ; he went aside, took a book and sat down at a table. Selma's glances followed him, obviously with hearty sympathy. Lennartson regarded her attentively.

* *i. e.* February, 1842.

† The Swedish Bee, 1842.

A little while afterwards, while St. Orme, taking up and pursuing the conversation which had been interrupted, communicated to the young gentlemen several things about Parisian life and its attractions, Lennartson advanced to Selma, seated himself beside her, and asked in an under tone—

"Was I too hard, Miss Selma?"

"O no," she answered in a sprightly manner ; "you were right in what you said, but——"

"But what? What is the 'But?'"

"I think that your words really did wrong to his heart, and—he thinks so much of you."

Lennartson said nothing, but after some time I saw him go to Felix and place his hand on his shoulder. A deep blush suffused his countenance when Felix looked up and met the glance, full of kindness, which Lennartson fixed upon him, with a look of hearty affection.

"It is so long a time since I have seen you at my house, Felix," said Lennartson in a friendly manner, "will you not dine with me to-morrow? I will not promise you," he continued in a strain of agreeable pleasantry, "any such meal as the O—skölds' dinner, but I promise, on the other hand, not to regale you with fare like that of Aurén. I confess that I myself should feel little satisfied with it."

Half embarrassed, half rejoiced, Felix accepted the invitation.

After the visitors were gone, we—especially my stepmother and myself—instituted our "*réflexions chrétiennes et morales*" on Aurén's and St. Orme's ideal of life. I grew warm in my advocacy of the former. My stepmother, however, threw cold water on my fire, spoke of "enthusiasm," "overstraining," and "extravagance," and said we could be "very good" though we lived like other people, took part in the pleasures of the world, and enjoyed its good things. She was for the maxim of Queen Christina—"The just measure" (but which she seemed entirely to forget in her own person). Flora became pensive, and said—

"When a child, and in the earliest period of my youth, I also had at times such Aurénean or Pythagorean fancies ; I dreamed of——but they soon taught me to laugh at such visions, and look for other things. Yet perhaps the latter are more a dream and a delusion than the former. Ah!" she pursued with a sudden outburst of melancholy, "that we could be born again! That we could be children again!"

She melted into tears.

Selma clasped her in her arms and began to weep with her. My stepmother looked perfectly confounded, and I rallied them on this "*lamentabile.*" Selma came over to my side, and thus we ended the day "*scherzando.*"

14th December.

We have passed several weeks in visits to the collections of art, academies, and various other public institutions in the metropolis. To some of them I shall frequently return, for many things in them possess great interest for me. And in what does the value of a solid education consist if not in this—that it teaches us to comprehend and appreciate all the various useful pursuits of men, and opens our eyes to the whole affluence of life? This, too, gives breadth and depth to our own

individual life. I observe also with pleasure that men of liberal education turn willingly to those in whom they perceive a real interest for science and learning, and by whom they feel themselves understood.

Lennartson, who accompanied us on these visits, in no slight degree enhanced the pleasure we derived from them, by his own great knowledge and his manner of inducing others to express their opinions. And how esteemed and beloved he is everywhere. Flora listens to him, but seldom to another; and in this betrays too much her propensity to shine herself. Selma is one of those persons who do not express a great deal, but who understand and conceal a great deal in their hearts. Lennartson and myself also listen attentively to every remark she makes; for they always contain something to excite, frequently to direct thought. She has a fine, pure judgment. A good head, together with a good heart, is a glorious thing in a human being.

Now the order of the day is to sit still, be diligent, and within the term of ten days get the Christmas presents ready.

It is not my business!

25th December.

Christmas eve, with its Yule presents, lights, and tarts is past. My stepmother, who is very fond of children, had invited the little ones of several acquaintances, and among them those of the Viking. Selma had worked several little things for them, and we amused ourselves with getting up gambols, in which Selma was as much a child as any of them. Felix assisted us with agility, but Flora was ill-tempered, and would neither divert herself nor others. Brenner's children are sweet, sprightly creatures, whose affection for their papa it is pleasing to observe. Rosina, the eldest, a girl of eight years, and Adolph, the youngest boy, pleased me best. The poor little fellow is rather lame in the hip. Was it the "maternal instinct," which one of my friends—a professor—maintains is ever found in woman, or a peculiar complacency that impelled me to the boy; but certain it is that when I had the child sitting on my knees, while he looked up to me with his bright glance of filial affection, I was involuntarily constrained to fold him in my arms, and press him protectingly and with an undissembled feeling of affection and longing to my breast. On perceiving, however, that his father was regarding us with an expression as if he would embrace us both, I became more cool in my tenderness. And the father, how he must love those children! Did I not this evening hear him say that in choosing a partner, we must by preference have regard to the offspring of the union, and the father or mother they are to have? I could not but admit that he was for the most part right in his view.

To me the crowning pleasure of the evening was my compatriot, Runeberg's beautiful little poem, "Christmas Eve," which the Viking had brought with him, and read aloud with a clear, fine expression. It made me fancy myself in my native land again, amid its wild natural scenery, its robust, contented, and patient people. My heart dilated. And now——it is time to go to church, and I will go thither.

In the Evening.

The sunshine was streaming through a large aperture in the choir as I entered the church, and light wreaths of incense from the tapers, which had just been extinguished after the conclusion of the early service, curled up in its bright beams to the vaulted ceiling. It was a beautiful sight. I found the church full of people, though I went in good time, so that it was not possible for me to obtain a seat. After various ineffectual attempts, I took the resolution to stand during the service, and discovered, too, a secure place beside a wall, between ladies seated and maids standing, to whom I offered some *eau de cologne*.

I was glad in my heart, and had never felt more *congregational*. When the organ sent up its mighty notes, my blood rolled in my veins and a gentle thrill crept through me, when a single voice arose and sang in a strong and calm tone of the highest wonder of the world—that wonder of which the nations speak at the present day, and perhaps at the present day more than ever—

"Unto you this day is born a Saviour."

The congregation then responded, and myself with them, with a full, overflowing heart.

The chanting was scarcely closed, when I heard a voice demand pretty roughly—

"Has Miss Adelan no place?"

It was the Viking, who really compelled me to take possession of his place, which was at a short distance. I was obliged to yield for the sake of the peace of the church. Brenner continued standing in my vicinity, and after the service accompanied me home. There I found Flora in a stormy temper. She had "headache from the childrens' cries of the foregoing evening;" she knew no worse days than Sundays, "on which people must yawn and be pious." The entire day through we were necessitated to be alone, in pursuance of my stepmother's rule of letting the domestics go to church this day, and resting for the remaining part. Neither were we invited! What was to be done the entire long day? We might yawn ourselves to death! And the next day—then it needs must be worse; then we must die of toil. Then one great draught was to bring to us the entire prolific race, "a dozen and a half of uncles and aunts, all turtles together; and more than twenty fair cousins, all of the haddock kind." And this whole number we were to see before us from mid-day to midnight, be civil to them from mid-day to midnight, and endeavour to *entertain* them from mid-day till midnight! Ah! it were enough to distract one!

Selma and I, and finally Flora herself, were constrained to laugh at these desperate circumstances, and we made various proposals to meet them with a bold front. I moved that we should resolve on being merry, and carry out everything that the Christmas humour might suggest. But Selma received this proposition with a slight shake of the head, and a—"that will not succeed. Some of our gracious aunts are rather squeamish, and Heaven has bestowed on me such a fund of spirits, that were I to give rein to them in their presence, they would consider me foolish."

My stepmother then came and bade us be "*tranquille*," all would "go off well and easy," she was "accustomed to such things," &c. We

were not to trouble ourselves, but keep cheerful, &c.

Selma sighed, and began to sing a song. In the evening she amused her mother and myself with reading. Flora went early to bed, which was a relief to us all.

The third day of the Christmas Festivities.

The great draught of fishes has been successfully got over, and we are resting with complacency on our laurels.

The dinner—well! while dinner is going forward, you can breathe even in the company of forty persons. Good eating is good society, and puts people in good temper. A great loss, however, it was that the Court Chamberlain did not make his appearance. We had counted upon his good stories as the pepper and salt of the dinner. But he is only gratified with small and choice dinner-parties and has no inclination to sacrifice himself.

Immediately after dinner you have coffee, which is also cheering; but then comes a heavy transit,—namely, from coffee to tea-time. You are drowsy from eating, drowsy from the warmth, drowsy from the society of thirty drowsy people, and drowsy from the office of amusing them. All this is no light thing. I know well that the being who looks most petrified has within him a living, glowing spark, and that it merely requires the steel to be applied to kindle it. I have often observed this with pleasure, and I therefore began to go round in the capacity of a steel; but, whether my fault or that of others, fire would flash in no place, nay, there was not even a little smoke or glimmer. True it is (and I said this by way of consolation) that I was too little acquainted with the greater part of the guests present, to know how rightly to strike them. Flora did not in the slightest degree trouble herself about the company, but sat there with an air of the greatest *ennui* in the world, and glanced through a music-book. Selma moved about among the guests with real politeness and cordiality, entered into conversation first with one and then with another, and endeavoured to gossip them into fellowship; and whereever she went, her graceful manner did not fail to call forth a little spiritual life, but it soon disappeared when she was away. In a word, things would not succeed, but it became more and more quiet and sultry, and drowsy, and I called to remembrance the description of a soirée in our highest "*haute volée*" written by a witty countess.

"We were like fish in a *cauf*, which, from the sultriness of the air, turn indolently round each other, now and then only moving their fins a little."

Three or four card-tables had engaged a part of the gentlemen; but we had several who did not play, much less converse, and a whole crowd of sedentary ladies—and all these were to be entertained till twelve o'clock at night!

It was something past six in the evening. My stepmother was sitting upon the sofa, and concealed her yawning under courteous airs; but her appearance grew more and more troubled, and her regards sought Selma, plainly asking:

"What are we now to bring forward?"

Selma came to me and whispered: "It is *horrible* here."

"In my despair I preached insurrection to aunt Pendelfelt, but she looked so "Heaven-preserve-us-*ly*," that I betook myself to flight. But now we must get up a revolution in order to enliven ourselves. Poor mamma already looks as if she were prepared to quit the field——"Have you no suggestion, no luminous idea?"

"Yes, a dazzling one. We will get up a Finnish Christmas-gambol, with song and dance, which I call to remembrance. I will propose it."

"Ah, that will not succeed."

"It must succeed."

And I raised my voice accordingly, and made the proposition that they should join in a Christmas-gambol.

From the gloomy and perfect silence which followed my proposal, I could discern how hazardous it was; and my stepmother looked in some measure embarrassed on my account.

But I have in me a certain Finnish vein which urges me with cheerful perseverance to carry through that which I have begun in stolid assurance. I therefore renewed my proposal with entire composure, and turned in particular to some ladies and gentleman in company, and expounded to them my plan of the sport, and solicited their assistance. I found too—especially among the ladies—some who were willing to enter into my plan, "but—it was so difficult." "The gambol involves singing, and we cannot sing," &c. A thousand difficulties! And Krusenberg, the royal secretary, whom I solicited "to dance with me," started back with alarm, and exclaimed: "No, heaven keep me, my gracious one! I cannot possibly do so." My senses began then to be shrouded with obscurity as to the manner in which the affair could be set going, when my good genius opened the door and ushered in Signora Luna, the Baron and Lieutenant Sparrsköld.

"We are saved," I whispered to Selma, "if we can only induce *these* to interest themselves for the enterprise."

"That will be accomplished, I think," she answered; "I see Lennartson coming towards us, we will speak to him."

On Lennartson's approaching us we communicated to him our grief, and I begged him most heartily to assist me in my hazardous expedition. For my entire life I shall be thankful to him for the accommodating promptitude and kindness with which he entered into the affair. There are actions in social life which testify goodness of heart and philanthropy, equally with visiting the captive in his cell.

In company with the Baron I went to Signora Luna, to solicit her patronage, and now our horizon became perfectly bright, for she answered frankly and with alacrity, that she would "more than willingly" lead the game, which she knew, and had frequently played in her childhood. And when the friendly beaming Lady Luna with the Baron led off the dance, and I followed them as Sparrsköld's partner, Krusenberg, the royal secretary, rushed towards Selma, and begged to be permitted to dance with her, and then there arose a movement, a stir and an uprousing among the company, and the train which migrated into the large hall became greater and greater. My stepmother engaged herself to Miss M——, who had no cavalier, other ladies followed their example, elderly gentlemen and ladies came too,—soon the

entire number of guests were in the room, the merry gambol was in full course, and pleasantry and laughter flourished. My stepmother began to look happy.

It occasioned me surprise when I caught sight of St. Orme, (whom I had not seen enter) with Flora among the dancers—and Flora no longer petulant and chagrined, but shining more and more with gaiety and beauty in the light which beamed from the eyes of the newly-arrived gentleman.

The game was properly speaking not one of forfeits, but the Baron made it such at the instigation of Signora Luna, who thought that the redemption of the forfeits might be amusing. And when the dance had lasted a tolerable while, and it seemed as if people were beginning to be fatigued, and a multitude of pledges had been taken, our Lady "with the bright eyes" seated herself with stateliness and solemnity in the middle of the circle, and exclaimed :

"Who is the owner of this pretty thing?"

One of the first who had to redeem a forfeit, was Krusenberg, the royal secretary. The task adjudged to him was to declaim something to the company ; and as he was known to possess talent in that art, there arose a general attention, which was still heightened by the subtle air with which the young declaimer advanced to execute his work. During the gambol he had frequently evinced a desire to produce effect, and now obviously made a point of "striking" us right powerfully. He did so in reality, though in no agreeable manner, when he began with much pathos to recite—Our Lord's Prayer.

With a flash of noble indignation from her eyes, Selma arose, went to him and said : "Secretary Krusenberg, it were better not to pronounce the sacred words at all than in such a manner."

The declaimer paused, in some measure impressed.

"The deuce! how strict Miss Selma is to-day!" he then said, blushing, and added, while making an effort to appear unembarrassed :

"Well then I must choose something else."

And then he commenced declaiming some French verses, but he did not acquit himself well, he was evidently put out of temper by this little scene, and the impression it appeared to produce on those present. I cast a hasty glance at Lennartson, who was standing at some distance without the circle formed by the players, and read in his eyes —which followed Selma—an expression of decided approbation and joy.

With a strongly heightened complexion, Selma seated herself beside me, and after remaining quiet awhile in her sedentary posture, she turned her beautiful eyes, now again so mild, and asked :

"Did I wrong, Sophy?"

"You did very right," I replied, pressing her hand.

"But I was certainly too warm, too sharp?"

"No. But if you think it was so, say some words to the young man in explanation."

"Yes, I have already thought of doing so," rejoined Selma.

An elderly gentleman who had distinguished himself during the gambol by his amusing contrivances and vivacity, now came panting on, seated himself beside us, and said in a cheerful strain :

"It is a most charming thing to be made so sprightly. When we grow old and dull, and all around us is still, why, we may then feel so obtuse, so spiritless, as of necessity to think : 'It is now over with you, poor fellow, over, quite at an end with you.' But when we chance to be excited and roused by any thing, then we can perceive that it is not yet over with us. Yes, then so much in us may take new life and animation that we are gladly surprised at it, and needs must think : 'Ah, that you can be still so young and lively!'"

On this I made the sapient remark, that this was an additional proof that the soul preserved its essence in entire integrity, though in its evening twilight—which we call "old age"—it slumbered for a little while.

The old man smiled, and replied—"What a charming creature she is! It does an old heart positively good to gaze at and talk to her!"

Since it appeared to me that these words were little appropriate in answer to my observation, I regarded the old gentleman with astonishment, and perceived that his eyes, sparkling with pleasure, were riveted on Selma, who, in order to redeem a forfeit, had been adjudged "to stand as a statue," and who accomplished her task in a very agreeable manner. While now in my turn I—like my neighbour—regarded her in silence, St. Orme's voice became audible to me. In his accustomed soft, almost gliding manner, he seated himself quite close to me, saying in a melancholy tone entirely unusual in him—

"You doubtless remember my blessed consort —Virginia?"

"Yes," I replied ; "she was one of the most beautiful women I have ever known."

"Do you not fancy," he pursued, "that Selma bears some resemblance to her—less in respect of feature than in expression and her entire presence and manner ; for instance, in possessing pride and amiability at the same time—the union of the princess and the Sylphide—the *Virgin* in the highest sense of the term? And her voice! it frequently calls back to my remembrance that which is hushed to me for ever."

Such words from St. Orme! I gazed at him with astonishment, but still and absorbed in sorrowful recollections, he appeared to have forgotten me and all around him.

Why from the very beginning of our acquaintance did I place myself in opposition to St. Orme? Why have I not bent my thoughts upon seeking what is good in him? At the time I am speaking of, his entire being seemed to me ennobled.

If men were *ever* what they are in their best moments, then, in this nether world, we should have a celestial kingdom of beauty and goodness. But——!

The redemption of the forfeits, which was interspersed with song and dance, lasted till supper. After this was concluded, I saw Selma softly direct her steps to a window at which Krusenberg was standing. A short time afterwards she came to me, and whispered—

"Now I have concluded a treaty of peace with Krusenberg."

"And what did you say to him?"

"I begged him to forgive my warmth of deportment towards him, but at the same time com-

municated to him the painful impression he had induced in me; and, in a word, I was friendly and frank with him."

"Very good; what did he say?"

"He?—Well, what do you think? He thanked me, and acknowledged his error, his levity; nay, he imputed so many faults to himself, that I grew quite uneasy at hearing them—— But, Sophy, how much that is good there is in people!"

"Why now, is not that my perpetually-recurring text? But we must also be vigilant to bring it into light. As your call in the forest is the echo returned."

And such were the "*faits et gestes*" on this day, the memorandum of which, however, I cannot conclude, without noticing the "*mention honorable*" which I received from my stepmother at its close for my good behaviour, my appearance, and my toilet. The latter part of the eulogy melted away into the following piece of *clair-obscure*:—

"And in that dress, with your beautiful white arms and the pearls in your brown hair, and all that—you did not look above twenty years of age——and so *distinguée!* And I assure you that more than one——hem, hem, hem!"

I (modestly, and half inquisitive to hear more): "Ah, my sweet mother."

My Stepmother: "Hem, hem! I say nothing as long as——hem, hem, hem!"

28th December.

FRAGMENT OF A CONVERSATION.

"But tell me, Selma, what interpretation am I to put on Flora's demeanour towards both Lennartson and St. Orme? She loves, certainly, the former, and is betrothed to him; and yet the latter exercises extraordinary power over her! And she—how unevenly and strangely she deports herself towards him! At times she appears coquettish, at times fearful in his presence; at times almost at enmity with him, then quite tender, nay, humble, and then again so proud—what can indeed be the ground of all this?"

Selma, with a sort of anxiety: "Ah, do not question me! I do not know, I understand not what the connection is; but this I do know, that since St. Orme's arrival, Flora has been entirely changed. Her temper was never otherwise than uneven, and her lively imagination always made her jump from one subject to another; but she was withal so agreeable, so amusing and amiable."

I: "How long has Flora been betrothed to Lennartson?"

"Something above a year. It took place at her mother's death-bed. But I do not know for what reason their betrothal has not been declared since then. The old General Lennartson was afflicted with a stroke of paralysis about the same time, and his son travelled with him abroad in order to recruit his health. On Lennartson's return, some months since, St. Orme was here, and Flora—altered. But she will not talk of this, and is equally unwilling to hear it spoken of. And certainly the connection which at present subsists between them must soon sustain another change. It appears to me so unnatural. I have hopes in the New-year's Sun, and his power. Do you observe how 'Matilda' is already blushing between 'King Hiskia' and 'Lord Wellington;' and here is 'King Ahasuerus' beginning to open his light-blue eyes; and beautiful it must be to see them all in full bloom!"

In this manner my younger sister endeavoured to evade a subject which was painful to her, and to forget dark images in the contemplation of bright ones. But the dark ones ought not to be overlooked; they must be penetrated into, and —whenever it is possible—*pervaded with light*. I intend to keep my eyes open after this.

1st January, 18 . . .

A bouquet of fresh flowers and a cordial shake of the hand from the Viking, constitute the grateful impression I retain from the forenoon's visits.

In the Evening.

Dressed ready for the Hall of Exchange—black silk with lace, white pearls in my hair, round my neck and arms. Be still, my beloved Selma, you must not make me vain; you must not put your elder sister to confusion.

Flora is to drive to the Exchange with "The Beauty," at whose house she is to prepare her toilet. I am not in good spirits, nor can I believe that things will be agreeable. But a quiet *lady observer* should know no vexation, when she herself is to make no figure. It is now ten years since I saw the world at the New-year's Assembly in Stockholm. How will it now appear? *Allons et voyons.*

2d January.

We will now gossip a little about the annual ball given by the citizens at the Exchange.

On our entering the large, splendidly-lighted hall—we went rather late—the upper, *i. e.* the aristocratic part of the room, was occupied. My stepmother, notwithstanding, directed her steps thither, saying to us by way of encouragement—

"O, we shall certainly find room."

But their graces sat like rocks on their seats, and on Selma's whispering an earnest entreaty, her mother desisted from all attempts to move them. We described, then, with all dignity a semicircle, retreating amid courteous greetings to the nether end of the room, where we obtained places in the vicinity of the door. At this moment Count Gyllenlöf's brilliant group made their appearance, accompanied by the family of the Silfverlings. On their pausing for a moment at the entrance in order to take a survey of the room, my stepmother rose to speak to the Countess; but the latter turned away with a laconic, cold salutation, and swept by with her brilliant suite as if she had not at all noticed us. My stepmother resumed her seat, visibly disconcerted and nettled. Selma seemed no less so on her account, and said with vexation—"How stupid they are!" A comet-like phenomenon then moved rapidly through the apartment. It was Flora and her sister, with an escort of gentlemen. They were both dazzlingly beautiful, and dressed with the greatest elegance. Flora nodded to us with vivacity, and followed her sister to the upper part of the room, and took possession of seats in the vicinity of the party of Count Gyllenlöf, who had procured themselves places close to the dais which had been prepared for the royal family. Selma pursued Flora with

her eyes, and they filled involuntarily with tears. We sat tolerably forlorn among people entirely unknown to us. My stepmother looked greatly troubled, and I felt very much oppressed on account of my family. It was then my young sister took courage, and began in her sprightly manner to introduce to me those who were arrived and arriving; my stepmother regained her good spirits thereby, and was at the same time challenged by me also to display to me her extensive knowledge of the world and of men. Meanwhile we fell into conversation with a very pretty and very young lady, who appeared eagerly desirous to learn something of the great world about her, and which she then saw for the first time. The charming young damsel amused us with the sprightliness and innocent unreserve with which she communicated to us her great solicitude about not being able to get a dance that evening, inasmuch as she had no acquaintances there, and, besides, had so little experience of the great world, was so timid, &c. She should, however, still console herself to sitting still the entire evening without a dance, if she could only see the royal family; but they had told her it was probable that they would not attend the ball this evening; and she had promised her little sisters to wake them on her returning home, and tell them about the princess and the young princes. Her anxiety, however, was converted into the most lively joy, when the royal chamberlains made their appearance, and every one in the assembly stood up to salute the Queen, who with the Crown Prince and Princess, and the two eldest princes, Charles and Gustav, entered the Hall, accompanied by a brilliant suite, and, amid friendly greetings, walked through the apartment to take their places on the estrade; and then Selma and I began to rejoice that we were seated near the door, and from thence could see the royal family so well.

Selma's recent young friend was in complete ecstasy, and immediately bestowed her heart on Prince Gustav, while Selma playfully informed her that she had selected Prince Charles for her heart's favourite.

Scarcely were the Royalties seated, when the Gyllenlöf's party fell into a conversation with their suite. Young Silfverling was exceedingly gallant to the ladies in waiting.

The country dance began slowly to form at the upper part of the room. The royal chamberlains had gone forth to convey to the chosen invitations to dance, delivered in the name of the august visitors. Soon you saw the Crown Princess, with a majestic air and sparkling with jewels, lead off the dance with N—— the baker—a little, rotund man, whose good-natured and polite manner, however, showed that truly *humane* education easily removes all, even the most considerable difference of rank. The Crown Prince danced with a young lady of the commonalty, and Prince Charles with —our recent little friend, who was so very fearful of not being able to dance this evening, and who now was beaming with the charms of youth and the beauty of innocent joy, led by the courteous young prince. She was mentioned as the eldest daughter of M——, the merchant. I fancied she might at that moment think—"What would my sisters say, if they were here!"

Lennartson danced with Flora; Selma with Felix Delphin; and, perceiving that my stepmother became more and more contented, and that she was engaged in a conversation with her fair neighbour, I began to use my eyes and ears more freely, and to glean and gather in what the opportunity offered.

The ball was charming, and the world, it seemed to me, had abided pretty much the same, as when I saw it nearly a dozen years since; old acquaintances, too, were in most instances still as formerly. Time had passed with a light step over the faces of the greater part of them, having merely graven in them some straggling furrows. Only on two countenances known to me did I see the traces of an important story—a great advancement; in the one on the way of goodness, the other that of evil. As to the rest, I saw a multitude of pleasing forms among the youth of both sexes. People assert that ugliness and stupidity disappear more and more from the world. Well, a prosperous journey to them!

To the right of me I heard the two young Bravanders conversing together at this moment; the one said:

"No, a thousand devils shall fetch and tear me to pieces."

And the other answered:

"Yes, the devil shall ride me! The devil in hell shall ride me."

And the first speaker pursued:

"No, ten thousand thunderbolts shall strike me dead."

And his companion rejoined:

"Yes, the devil shall sway me."

A neat old gentleman of rather sarcastical appearance then advanced to the two interlocutors, and, with a smile, wished them "good continuation of their sport."

On my left Hilda and Thilda Angel were talking about the two gentlemen mentioned above. Hilda said:

"Ah, he is *so* handsome, Axel Bravander, with his beautiful eyes and well-trimmed mustachio. Oh heaven, how handsome he is!"

THILDA. "And his brother, to my taste, is not less handsome. And how he waltzes! Really divine! He has engaged me for the second waltz. Ah, he is *so* handsome a man."

HILDA AND THILDA TOGETHER. "Ah, they are both *so* handsome, *so* handsome, *so* handsome."

"Oho!" thought I, with a smile, "we are not yet entirely quit of the stupid and the ugly."

I was now interrupted in my observations by a middle-aged lady of a good-looking and sprightly exterior, who greeted me with friendly warmth; and, seizing my hand, said:

"Ah, my excellent Mam— Miss —— Mrs. — pardon me, I have forgotten by what title I shall address you — I wish you a joyful New-year. What an agreeable thing it is to see Mam— Miss *** here again. And how does the Lady Governor General of the province—I mean her grace the stepmother of Miss ——."

I knew well that I was acquainted with the lady who thus accosted me; at that moment, however, I could not call to remembrance her name or rank, and as, in conformity with a most ridiculous custom which prevails in our social intercourse, I could not address her by the pro-

noun *You*, I felt quite embarrassed, since she appeared so assured of being recognised by me. While vexing myself on this, and the incomprehensible awkwardness of our social usages, I hit upon the—as it seemed to me—brilliant idea of calling my unknown acquaintance "Your Grace." She looked rather surprised at this, and our conversation halted in some measure, till Signora Luna (who had brought her vigil over the Queen to a close) came to us, and, giving me a hearty shake of the hand, with friendliness addressed my unknown one in these words: "Ah, good day, lady Provost R. Happy New-year! How does the gentleman Provost find himself?"

"I thank my gracious Baro— or Countess for the kind inquiry. I hope the Baro— I meant to say Countess, will pardon my being so unhappy as never to remember names or titles. Am I not permitted to say Countess?"

"Might we not say quite plainly, You and Your to each other?" answered Signora Luna, smiling; "we should then avoid all ceremonies, and do you know what Kellgren says, 'the plainer, the simpler.'"

"Ah, if that would find adoption!" exclaimed the fair provost with a bright expression, "it would be really and truly a fortunate thing, especially for me, who have so bad a memory, and am so very fearful of being uncourteous. But will this really be adopted?"

"I see nothing to prevent it," rejoined our lady with the bright eyes, "if we lady provosts, baronesses, countesses, and ladies of all ranks only make it an object to ourselves to carry it out. For you know well that 'the will of God and that of the ladies are identical.' Is it not so, my excellent Master in Chief of the Ceremonies?" she continued, turning to the neat old gentleman before mentioned, "does not the Chief Master of the Ceremonies think that the Chief Master of the Ceremonies himself and we all should have a far more easy life here in Sweden, if we, like all civilised nations, availed ourselves of the style of address which our beautiful language affords in the words You and Your instead of everlasting *titling*? I should be perfectly terrified to speak to the Gentleman Master in Chief of the Ceremonies, when I bethink myself that I should be constrained to address the Gentleman Master in Chief of the Ceremonies by the title of a Master in Chief of the Ceremonies, and that all the obstructions which the title of Master in Chief of the Ceremonies places in the way of my tongue and thoughts revert every moment. And now I vow never to speak with the Gentleman Master in Chief of the Ceremonies, if the Gentleman Master in Chief of the Ceremonies does not give me permission to address the Gentleman Master in Chief of the Ceremonies quite simply by You or Your and use the same style of address to me.

"*You* are perfectly right, Madame," the courteous old gentleman rejoined with a smile, "and if *You* can make *Your* purpose a desirable object with men generally, *You* will deserve thanks at the hands of all Sweden. I cannot comprehend why people at court and in social circles will be less European than they are in the Swedish Academy, where they address each other quite simply by You and Your, words which are, besides, of as good a *ton* and sound as well as the '*Vous*' of the French, the English '*You*,' the German '*Sie*,' and the '*De*' of our northern brethren."

"That is excellent!" exclaimed Signora Luna. We conclude, then, on this present New-year's day, a covenant to adopt the words You and Your in our intercourse and every-day life. And a new, better day shall then rise upon our written and spoken language. Allow Yourself to be presented to these two ladies, my especially good acquaintances. I say not to You whether they be Mistresses or Misses, but only that they are very agreeable persons, that you may call them You and Your, and that they will address you in the same manner; and now I leave to You a closer acquaintance through address and answer."

And we conversed, and the conversation went easily and well. The flexibility and ease in the new style of address gave wings to our discourse; and I found the Master of the Ceremonies to be one of the most interesting of old gentlemen, and the lady Provost one of the most agreeable and animated in the world.

The dance was pursued in the interim, but—as is usual with this New-year's Assembly—without particular vivacity. People come together on this occasion rather to see and be seen, to salute one another with a "happy New-year," and to talk with one another, than for the purpose of dancing. Precisely at eleven o'clock, the royal family repaired to the room on the right, in order to receive and answer the compliments of the diplomatic corps. On entering the dancing-room again they began to go the great round in it. And I pitied them for the very reason that they were obliged to utter several hundred empty words, and listen to the like from strange men. Yet the procession was brilliant and beautiful to look upon. The splendid array of the Queen (she was almost covered with jewels,) and her courteous deportment called forth almost involuntarily, profound nods and bows; to the tall, noble forms of the Crown Prince and Princess you so willingly look up, and no one regards without a motion of pleasure and hope, the two lofty, slender young Princes —the elder of whom is dark complexioned, and manly, the younger, fair and gentle; while the bloom of unspoiled youth tints the ruddy faces of both.

It was the Crown Princess, however, that mainly attracted my regards to herself. I called to remembrance that twenty years before I saw her make her entrance into Stockholm, seated in the gilded glass-carriage with transparent windows, her delicate form arrayed in silver net, with the crown of jewels on her head, her cheeks so rosy-red, light blue eyes beaming so brightly—greeting the people who thronged houses and streets, crowded about her carriage, and with unceasing cheers hailed in her the bright young hope of their country. She was the centre of attraction to the looks of all, and the sun shone in glory upon her. Certainly, the heart of the young princess must have beaten high at sight of this universal homage of love and joy, this triumph of happiness in the affections of the people. Many such brilliant moments life does not possess.

Signora Luna has informed me that, at the time I am speaking of, when the princess arrived at

the royal palace, after the procession through the city was terminated, and while the carriage was thundering on through the high, gloomy archway, she stooped her head quickly and low down upon her hands; on raising it again, her eyes were suffused with tears—with quiet *devotion* she had made her entrance into her future dwelling.

I thought of all this while the royal procession was gradually drawing nigh to us. I thought how the hopes which the young princess then excited, had been realised—I thought how her life had been spent since that period, how she had distinguished herself by unobtrusive greatness, as consort and mother, as an encourager of industry, and a helper to the poor and the suffering; how she stood there an ornament to religion, the land that bare her, the people that she now calls hers—and I honoured and loved her in the depth of my heart. I fancied I could read in her large expressive eyes, how wearisome to her were the empty words which she was constrained to speak and listen to; I held it to be absurd, that merely for the sake of courtesy no really and truly cordial word should reach her ears; I therefore allowed my heart to emancipate itself from such bondage, and my mouth to greet her with bold assurance in the words—"God bless your Majesty!" The large eyes glanced at me with some surprise, which however, assumed a colouring of friendliness, as she passed by with a graceful salutation, and stopped on coming up to Selma, whom she knew, and with whom she conversed a tolerably long while with perfect ease, delighted, it appeared, by the agreeable unconstrained deportment of my young sister. The queen and my stepmother spoke French together as if they had been youthful acquaintances. The Crown Prince talked to Lennartson, who had for some time united himself to our party. From all this there arose a tolerably long suspension of the movements of the royal suite, and their pausing before us drew all regards upon us with a certain degree of curiosity.

Scarcely had the royal family withdrawn before the Gyllenlöfs, as if struck by a sudden light, hastened towards us with the warmest tokens of friendship, and begged us "at length" to keep them company. They would procure us places near the estrade; we must absolutely follow them to the upper part of the room!

My stepmother, who is readily conciliated, allowed herself to be persuaded. We went; we arrived at the estrade; the Silfverlings began to sit closer, and we obtained places. My stepmother was constrained to respond to a vast deal of courtesy and welcoming, Selma rejected three invitations to dance with young Silfverling, and I now understood what she meant by "*spasmodic acquaintances.*"

Shortly after the royal family had quitted the assembly, we also left it. The luckless "Philosopher' had forgotten Flora's goloshes, at which she was very angry and unhappy. Selma entreated her pressingly to take hers, and Flora—took them after some refusing. Lennartson appeared to be nettled and displeased, and my stepmother troubled at this. All my entreaties, on the other hand, could not induce Selma to take mine. In the vestibule we were detained a pretty long time, through the throng of people. Lennartson threw down his cloak before Selma, and compelled her to step upon it, that she might not get cold feet by standing on the cold stone pavement. His considerate care called up the ugly trait of jealousy on Flora's countenance. St. Orme quietly regarded her while he evinced the greatest courtesy towards her. He gave her his arm; Lennartson led my stepmother, the Court Chamberlain, myself. We now came into collision with aunt Pendelfelt, who said in a half audible voice to Flora: "Well, my sweet friend, when can we wish you joy, provided a question of this sort is permitted us?" Flora put on an air of astonishment and vexation, but St. Orme answered with a smile: "Quite certainly before next New-year."

At these words Lennartson looked at him with an inquiring, keen glance; St. Orme averted his eyes to another side, and Flora seemed to gnash her teeth. Aunt Pendelfelt now turned towards Selma and Felix, and apparently with a similar question, which Selma eagerly strove to evade, begging Felix to go forward. At this moment the crowd of people opened, and we were free.

In the carriage my stepmother and I vied with each other in wrapping Selma's feet in our mantles and shawls. At home, we all enjoyed a light supper with good temper, and amused ourselves with projecting all sorts of aërial plans for the future. We laughed much; but after a whisper from St. Orme, Flora became serious and gloomy. Contemporaneously I perceived telegraphic signs between my stepmother and uncle, which spoiled my humour; and upon our separating on this first day of the year, several of us were out of spirits. But Selma, good, cheerful, and playful, prevented any fretful difference, and amid mutual pleasant wishes we said "Good night" to one another.

And thus it is in our life and home here in the North. We there jostle a good deal *with* and *against* one another, are not infrequently affected in an unfriendly manner, troubled and vexed in spirit; and must seek the remedy for this in ourselves and our homes; for without, things are not here as in the affluent South. Hence it is such a beautiful thing, when a tone of love and joy runs through the house as a fundamental note. Then all dissonances gradually dissolve, and we may in peace say "Good night" to each other.

7th January.

Good morning, Life. A beautiful, bright day. Snow lies on the southern mountains, glancing in dazzling whiteness to the light blue sky. It is not yet very cold, and the sun sheds streams of light on palace and hut, wave and bank, man, brute and statue. Sea-mews decked in their bright snowy plumage, wheel above the Norrstream; where the water of the lake with the thirteen hundred islets breaks forth into the briny ocean and mingles its waves with the foaming billows. This stream acts an important part in my life. Its roaring is my lullaby when I lay myself to bed in the evening. In the morning it supplies me with water for ablution, and its wild, refreshing vapours, and bracing coolness, awaken in me reminiscences of my life on the rivers of Cautua—feelings of youthful freshness and replete with the joy of existence. In its rushing waves I first see the light reflected when I hail the dawning day from my window.

Light—water—these first-fruits of the Creator's bounty to the earth and which remain up to the present day for the use of all men—why do we not more fully appreciate their beneficent power, why do we not allow ourselves each day to be baptized with them into fresh courage and gratitude?

I stood at my window this morning, and with full inspirations drunk in the fresh air, which streamed into my window together with the light. I have had cheerful thoughts. I remembered some Polish nobles who visited Sweden last summer, and their respectful feelings towards this country. "A land never conquered by a foreign power. A people that has asserted its freedom by its own energy!" said they with an expression of joy and grief. (The latter had reference to their own country.) And I sang in a low tone part of Malmström's beautiful, tender song, "The Fatherland" — verses which have frequently thrilled through my soul I sang with affection:

"Thou indigent—thou Swedish soil,
Thou field for the war of need!
* * * * * *
* * * * * *
Thou richly-honoured Father-land,
Where ancient strength still dwells,
Thou lofty rock-encircled strand,
Round which the true wave swells,
On thee—wherein home-joys have birth—
May God, in trouble as in mirth,
Shed blessings from His hand."

I thought, too, on my own so happy state of present independence. O Freedom, how sweet it is to enjoy thee after long years of bondage!

I also thought on something that is dear to me, and which assumes a more and more positive character. I feel that I am coming into an ever-improving and more harmonious relation to my fellow-men. Since I have become internally clear, since—at peace with myself—I have no longer vehemently desired to please others, and eagerly sought their love and applause, I please them far more, and find, too, far greater pleasure in them. Since, in man as in woman, I have before all things regarded and addressed myself to the *man*, I have had for men, and men have had for me, a sort of "*thee-and-thou*" fellowship—a certain brotherly confidence which opens the heart to one another and makes life beautiful. In one word, I feel with increasing distinctness that "philanthropy is precisely my *forte*."

Pursuant to this two beings approach nearer and nearer to my heart. Selma and William Brenner, my young sister and my—*friend*. Selma's amiability and cheerful, harmonious deportment make me happy. She has by one effort put from her the mask of the satirist, which marred the beauty of her features, and since this, her native wit seems to me only the more pointed. Satire may play even upon the lips of an angel, and Mirth and Wit be at our service in the mansion of our Lord and Master. Does He not show us this in nature? Does He not dispense over flood and field, amid clouds and stars, an infinite amount of gaiety and smiling joy, that shine forth in sunny as in dreary moments, and give animation to the hearts of His creatures?

William Brenner, the Viking — why at the thought of him do I feel a kind of sunshine in my heart? Love it is not, that I know for a certainty. But the connection which subsists between us affords me pleasure. For some time past I have been wont to see him frequently, and I ever feel a complacency of heart when near him. I like to talk to him about my Finnish father-land, the wild natural scenery of Aura, the peculiarities of the people who inhabit it and their manners, its wonderful mythic legends and songs with magic arts and potent *primitive words*—the keys to the intrinsic nature of things — my own vigorous childhood on the rushing, pearl-abounding streams, beneath the shade of the elm. How kindly, nay, how willingly does he listen to me; how well he answers the thoughts and feelings I express, sometimes seriously, sometimes with mild pleasantry. Ofttimes, also, it is permitted me to call to his remembrance scenes of his own unquiet life, images from the opposite polar circle, from ocean and desert, torrid Africa and marvellous Egypt, scenes of battle about Mount Atlas. It is rarely that he communicates any thing about these things; but how eagerly do I listen when he does give an account of them. The pictures are so grand, and I feel, too, that there is something great in the spirit that apprehends them.

And what feeling is it which determines the Viking so obviously and so heartily to seek my society?—Love?—No! that I do not and will not believe, at least not in the sense in which people usually take this word. The pretty generally current notion, that man and woman approximate heartily alone under the influence of this feeling, is not correct. They mutually seek and require each other because they admire a peculiar kind of excellence in each other, because they are reciprocally the complement to each other's existence. *He* finds revelations of life in her, *She* discovers her world brightened in him, and thus they attain—the one through the other—to harmony and fulness of life.

Such was this day my train of thought as I looked on my serene sky and breathed my fresh free air.

The family's horizon has shown itself tolerably free from clouds since New-year's day last. My stepmother is in very high spirits amid a host of New-year's visits. This has prevented our falling into any profound debate; but since the question of the emancipation of women, we have both been alertly on our guard, and my stepmother appears to suspect that conspiracies and revolutionary designs are lurking beneath the entirely innocent opinions I have expressed.

11th January.

St. Orme comes at times early in the morning and solicits secret interviews with stepmother. On such occasions she always looks confused, and is for some time afterwards vexed and disquieted, till new impressions remove this state of temper. I anticipate that these private conferences are concerning money, which he borrows of her. May the kindness of my stepmother not lead her into embarrassments! I have heard bad things said about St. Orme's concerns, his life and his *liaisons*. Felix, too, it should seem, seduced by his sophisms

and the example of his friends, the Rutschenfelts, is on bad ways. I have spoken to Brenner on the subject of my suspicion of St. Orme. But the Viking espouses his cause, and since his sojourn in Paris has had dealings with him, which make the seaman loth to believe anything bad of him.

13th January.

My ill anticipation has a good, that is to say, a bad foundation. Hellfrid Rittersvärd wrote a note to Selma this morning, begging the loan of thirty riks-daler. She needed this sum to pay her youngest brother's schooling, and will be in a condition to return it in two months. With eyes sparkling with desire to fulfil Hellfrid's entreaty, Selma showed the letter to her mother, and begged her to advance the wished-for sum, which she herself did not possess.

"With infinite pleasure, my dear child," exclaimed my stepmother, ever ready to give; hastened to her writing-desk and opened the casket in which she generally keeps her money; but suddenly she appeared to remember something, and turned pale. She took up a purse, which the day before was filled with heavy pieces of silver, put her hand instinctively into it, but extracted merely a few riks-daler. An expression of painful perplexity was depicted on her countenance, while she said almost with a stammer: "Ah, I have not—I cannot—at present. St. Orme has borrowed all my money. He has promised me to pay it back in a few days, but—till then—what are we to do?" My stepmother had tears in her eyes, and her aspect of anxiety and pale cheeks—— I darted up into my chamber and came instantly down again with two—Canary-birds. (Thus Selma and my stepmother playfully name the large yellow bank notes, while to others, according to their appearance and value, they give the name of different birds.)

Selma embraced me and danced with joy at the sight of the yellow notes. But my stepmother accepted them with a sort of embarrassment, and unpleasant condescension, which affected me a little. She promised that I should speedily get them again. And if I "should wish at any time to borrow of her, I might count upon it with certainty," &c. &c. Her coldness cooled me down; yet, in the afternoon, we ruled the state by our conjoint efforts, and systematically handled several matters of importance, I venture not to say according to what system, if it were not that of—confusion. I had my thoughts elsewhere; they followed Felix and Selma. He appeared to solicit of her an interview in private, which she seemed bent upon evading, and succeeded in accomplishing her purpose.

15th January.

To-day he came here at quite an early hour. Selma and I were alone in the inner room. She was tending her flowers at the window. After a brief conversation with me, Felix drew nigh to her. Selma went to another window, he followed her, she was preparing to fly into the adjoining apartment, when Felix placed himself in the door-way, obstructed her passage, and exclaimed in a tone of entreaty:

"No, Selma, now you durst no longer avoid me! Selma, grant me an interview of an hour, unless you wish that I should utterly despair."

A deep red suffused Selma's countenance, a degree of anxiety appeared to take possession of her heart, but she wrestled with herself, and looking down on a monthly rose in her hand, she seemed willing to await what Felix would say. I for my part deemed it proper to go my way and to let the two young people explain themselves to each other, and I did go my way—not without a feeling of disquietude.

In the saloon I found my stepmother in a mysterious conference with the Court Chamberlain. She looked more than ever like Prince Metternich. I took no concern about it, and went up into my room, in which I immediately afterwards received a visit from Hellfrid Rittersvärd. And out of this visit there arose quite unexpectedly a confidence, wh—— well, well, my gracious, diplomatic lady stepmother, I too can assuredly have my state secrets. But to my diary I may indeed confide the intelligence that Hellfrid Rittersvärd, after consideration of divers kinds, and the anxiety of real attachment, has yielded to Ake Sparrsköld's true devotion and solicitations, and promised to be his as soon as their pecuniary affairs will admit of a union between them. A long time, however, may elapse before this can be effected. Before Sparrsköld gets a company, no thought at all can be entertained of it; and his superior officer, Captain Rummel, will probably abide a long time still in his post as chief of the division. Hellfrid was agitated, and wished to know of me whether she had done well or wrong. I said "well," and this made her happy.

Not before two hours had elapsed could I seek Selma again. On entering the room in which I had left her, I found it vacated; but I saw that somebody had just lain upon the sofa, and leaned his head on the soft pillows. I picked up some rose-leaves that had fallen down, and saw tears sparkling in their pale-red folds.

With a troubled spirit I pursued my search after Selma, and found her in her room.

Her eyes sparkled, as they are wont to do when she has wept, and sighs heaved her breast. She soon opened her heart to my tenderly troublesome questions, and I was made acquainted with what she thought and felt in silence.

Felix had reproached Selma with the coldness and unfriendliness which for some time past she had evinced towards him, and had told her that she made him unhappy, and that he should be lost if she were not different in her demeanour towards him. He owned the weakness of his character, and his levity; but Selma might save him if she would, could make him an honourable and happy man. He begged her to bestow her hand upon him, and be serious in that she had so long sported with. As Selma's partner, he would become a new and a better man.

"Ah!" pursued Selma, "he spoke so well and with such warmth of what I could be to him, and all that he himself might and would be, that I had not the heart to resist his entreaties and promises. But I fixed a period of probation, not before the expiration of which term we —— I have always inclined to Felix, he has a kind heart and many good qualities, but he is so weak. And these few

years, or, properly speaking since he has attained his majority, he has deported himself with such levity and fickleness——We have been so dissatisfied with him. But he may alter, he may amend, and then———"

"Then you will make him happy, Selma?"

"Yes."

"And you are weeping?"

"Yes, I don't know why?"

"I do not like it in Felix, that he to some extent will do violence to your feelings."

"Ah, such is certainly not his will. But he fancies that I love him more than I do in point of fact, and that my cold deportment towards him proceeds from caprice in me, or his inconstant behaviour. From my childhood there has subsisted between our families a kind of agreement that we should be united, and we have ever been looked upon in silence, as betrothed. Felix has always desired this connection, my mother no less, and I had no objection to it till I became better acquainted with myself. I now know quite well that I can never really love Felix, for I cannot esteem him as I would and ought; but———"

"But what, my good Selma?"

"But if I can make him and others happy, I shall not be unhappy myself. And at a later period, perhaps Heaven will bestow upon me a little child, whom I can love, and in whom I can have joy of life."

Selma wept quietly as she spoke these words, with her head leaning on my shoulder.

I made known a wish to learn what Selma had really promised to young Delphin.

"I have entreated him," she answered, "not to speak to me about his love for an entire year, but to attest it by his actions and demeanour. If I am thereby convinced that his attachment to me is as great as he says, then, at the expiration of that period I will consent to be his bride. This I have promised. Felix desired nothing farther; he only begged a ring of me to wear on his finger in remembrance of this hour; and I gave him the one set with sapphire. He was so glad, so happy! Ah, Sophy, I too, must be happy, for I feel that I have acted rightly; I have perhaps saved a human being."

Selma's eyes reflected pure joy, though through a suffusion of tears. I heartily rejoiced at her discretion and kindness, but yet felt melancholy on her account.

18th January.

"Invited for the entire week!"

With these words my stepmother met me this morning, and her appearance betrayed a secret pleasure through an assumed veil of aristocratic languor and weariness of life. I did not give the slightest evidence of condolence, especially as I saw my stepmother as well as the two young ladies eagerly engaged with thoughts about their toilet. I felt happy to be able to escape such unpleasantness, and stay at home. My stepmother used a little persuasion to induce me "to be present." But it was not really and truly her earnest.

21st January.

Amid all the diversions which now prevail at home, amid all these beautiful dresses and artificial flowers, and so-called pleasures, strange symptoms break forth notwithstanding, which seem to attest the volcanic ground on which we are dancing. Flora has for some days past been equally mutable in temper as in attire, and I fancied she sought to captivate Lennartson's attention, or more accurately speaking, to *fascinate* him. And his regards, too, do follow her with vigilance; but rather with the earnestness of the observer, than the expression of an enraptured lover. It appears to me as if, in all these transformations on the part of Flora, his question were: "What is truth?" and such, too, is my inquiry. For while she obviously seeks to draw Lennartson to her, she does not contemn some subordinate conquests; and with her attractions and her deportment there is no lack of these. St. Orme apparently plays an indifferent part in this, but his cunning glance frequently betrays him as a secret watcher over her.

Among the pictures in the inner room, there is a fine portrait of Beatrice Cenci, the unhappy parricide. This day Flora stood contemplating it, absorbed in silent thought. I gazed at her, for she was beautiful as she stood there in a "*guirlande Ondine*" of coral, and white water-lilies in her brown hair, attired in that chameleon-sort of silk which is so much in vogue this year. All at once she broke silence by saying:

"Can you tell me, wise Madame Philosophy, why it is I feel pleasure in contemplating this picture—this Beatrice Cenci?"

"Probably because she is so touchingly beautiful," said I.

"No! but because she was energetic and resolute. Such people refresh the heart, especially when you are disgusted at the indecisive, feeble, characterless creatures that the world now has in such rich abundance. What is your opinion of Beatrice?"

"I pity her from my entire heart. It must be a dreadful thing to hate the author of one's existence——"

"Yes, a dreadful thing indeed," Flora interrupted me with warmth. "Yes, it is a dreadful thing to hate, but also dreadful to be constrained to *despise* one's parents."

Hereupon Flora concealed her face in her hands. I regarded her with astonishment and sympathy.

"Ah," she pursued with excitement, "let no one say that it is matter of indifference what kind of song is sung at the cradle of a human creature; it sounds through his whole subsequent existence. Lennartson, Selma!—Why are they so good, so holy; and I, why am I so—— And yet, Sophy, I am no common-place woman!"

I was silent, and Flora continued, keenly regarding me: "I know that you do not like me, and do me not justice; but still you cannot say that I am a *common-place* woman."

"Above the ordinary level and finely gifted, you unquestionably are," I replied, "but perhaps at bottom you are less so than you yourself believe. As to the rest, excellent Flora, I cannot judge of you, for I do not yet know you. You are often so unlike yourself, that you appear as if you were not *one* person, but consisted of two, nay, several."

"Yes; neither am I *one* person," rejoined Flora. "I have a double nature—a Fylgia and a Varsel—that is continually playing antics about me and is my other self—that follows me like a shadow, and places itself between me and all truth,

night and day, abroad and at home, weeping or laughing, in the ball-room or at church—yes, even in church it interposes between me and heaven. How then is it possible that I can have peace and become free. Ah, I would I were a little sparrow of the field."

"And why a sparrow," I asked.

"Because then nobody could concern himself about me, because then I should not know about ——But hush! I am conscious that one of my malignant demons is near."

"Let it gain no power over you," I entreated earnestly and with zeal.

"He *has* power over me already," said Flora, with acrimony, "and I stand on the brink of a precipice ——and soon, soon enough I shall be hurled down, unless—"

She became mute; low footsteps sounded in the outer room, and St. Orme entered. Soon after, my stepmother and Selma joined us, and we all went to supper at Silfverlings'.

23rd January.

New and disquieting symptoms! My stepmother has assumed her Metternich-mien, and the telegraphic motions between her and the Court Chamberlain increase. I shrewdly suspect a conspiracy against my precious personal freedom.

"We must set about the work prudentially, and a little diplomatically," I heard my stepmother a short time since say in a low voice to my uncle. "You have not surely let Sophia surmise anything?"

"No, but I delicately sound my depth as I go forward, and rely upon me, I understand how to deal with the ladies," he answered.

In addition to this, my stepmother torments me with encomiums on the Court Chamberlain, and the latter with inquiries about my views on the subject of furniture, as, for example, the shape of tables and buffets, &c. He is desirous, he says, in furnishing some new rooms, to conform entirely to my taste. But what does his furniture concern me?

If my stepmother sings my uncle's praise, he is no less liberal in extolling her.

"She is one of the best ladies I know," said he again to-day. "Such tact, discrimination, and discretion! You may confide anything to her—and I for my part—when it is my object to practise a little well-doing in quiet—know nobody whom I would so willingly, and with such perfect security, make my confidante."

I begin to get impatient of all this.

They talk of a marriage between Brenner and a handsome, rich young widow. This has startled me a little. Brenner's demeanour appears singular to me. Why has he not spoken to me about this union? I am indeed his lady friend, his sisterly friend. And why——I cannot suffer any equivocal conduct in him. But perhaps I am wrong in regarding it in this light.

24th January.

Coolness subsisting between my stepmother and me. Her attempt to overawe repulsed. Myself displaying pride and my sense of liberty, in no especially amiable manner. Looks of displeasure from Flora, beseeching and troubled glances on the part of Selma. General discomfort. If things continue thus, it will be amusing!

Ah, people say that life is stationary, when it is not enlivened or stirred by events from without. But it is not so. Methinks that at such periods, the angels in heaven are attentively mindful of our terrestrial existence, for then it is that the chords tremble in its inmost depths, then are developed the finest nerves of the social frame, then there is formed that which magnifies the power of heaven or of hell.

In the hour when the butterfly is unfolding its wings, it abides quite still in the secret place it has sought out for itself. In this hour of transformation, its life seems fully and completely internal. But the radiant butterfly and the nocturnal sphinx are children of the same still hour.

25th January.

A ramble out. Hateful, unpleasant day, people's complexions of a red and blue hue, the sky grey, icicles depending from every house, snow half an ell deep in all the streets, numbness of feeling, ungrateful thoughts! But "*even this will pass away*," was the apothegm wise Solomon gave to an eastern prince, who desired of him a sentence that might fortify the spirit in trouble, and humble it in prosperity; and this proverb I will cheerfully make my own.

26th January.

On going down to dinner this day I saw my stepmother and the Court Chamberlain sitting on the sofa, engaged in a confidential, whispering conversation, which they suddenly broke short when I entered. My stepmother appeared to be strongly excited. After a short time she came to me and said with stress, as she arranged some part of my toilet: "I must tell you that we have just had a long conversation about you and several things concerning you—hem, hem, hem!"

"About what things concerning me? asked I, with the appearance of dulness of apprehension.

"Why, of certain affairs that have all and each their importance, hem, hem, hem," said my stepmother smiling. And then she began a little speech about how happy she was to see all around her happy, how all her thoughts and efforts were directed to that object, how she was absolutely unmindful of herself and lived only for others, &c. I thought of my bitter youthful recollections, and presented a North-pole air to my stepmother's royal speech.

We went to table. The Court Chamberlain was "*aux petits soins*" with me and shared the choicest morsels between us both,—which did not put me at ease; the polite attentions of my stepmother I also returned coldly, and avoided Selma's glances, which seemed to ask: "What have we done to you?" At table youth was lauded as the golden time of life; during that period the Court Chamberlain, according to his own words, "had done full justice to the draught of enjoyment." I said that it was precisely my youth which furnished me with the bitterest reminiscences, which up to the present day exercised a disturbing influence upon my temper. I perceived in my stepmother's troubled look that in this she felt a reproach against herself. But I had a sensation about my heart as if a massive glacier were pressing upon it.

In the afternoon, while working a little collar, I expressed myself rather annoyed at not possess-

ing any blond with which to ornament it. My stepmother instantly hastened to her room, and speedily returned with a quantity of beautiful blond, which she laid playfully about my neck, begging me "to be content with that." At the same time I felt myself enfolded in her arms and her mild breath on my cheeks, while she whispered roguishly to me, that "my desire of emancipation should not prevent her holding me fast." In my then icy mood I saw in that embrace nothing but an attempt to abridge my freedom; I therefore coldly delivered myself from her and rejected the proffered blond, "because it did not suit me," I would myself procure that which I required. Quietly my stepmother went with her discarded gift into her chamber again, and on Selma's following her thither a moment after, I saw through the open door that she stood reclining at the window, motionless and looking sorrowfully before her, and I fancied tears were on her cheeks.

This sight went to my heart; secretly reproaching myself for my demeanour, I went up into my chamber, there to commune with myself in silence.

But I was well nigh not recognising my apartment, it was so altered, so improved; for awhile I knew not where I was. Among some beautiful pieces of new furniture that had been placed in the room, a most elegant mahogany bookcase was conspicuous; through whose plate-glass windows a great number of books, elegantly bound, smiled upon me, and from the top a Minerva's head of bronze looked majestically down.

At the ejaculation of glad surprise which escaped me, I heard behind me a half-snuffling, half-tittering tone, and on turning round I saw my good-natured maid coming out of a window niche, where she could no longer conceal her sympathy with my agreeable surprise.

"Her Grace has long been thinking on this matter," she related in the fulness of her heart, and the Court Chamberlain himself had the bookcase carried up-stairs, and with Miss Selma put everything in order shortly before dinner."

A revolution now took place within me. Probably I saw before me the object of all those secret conferences, telegraphic signs and intrigues, which I thought directed against my personal freedom. And they only had my comfort, my gratification in view. Perhaps it was the thought of this surprise which had that day made my stepmother so excited. I fancied I felt her embrace, her breath once again on my neck and cheek. And I—how had I deported myself towards her? suspiciously, distrustfully I had repelled her advances, extorted tears from her!

With the speed of lightning I hastened down to my stepmother, and there——

I have a propensity of a perilous character. When my feelings have been frozen and then suddenly become thawed by sunshine or a dew-drop of life, I am usually inundated with them like a spring-tide, and ready to flood the whole world with them. Yes, there is not a living mortal whom in such moments I could not press to my heart; and for those who are dear to me I have but one single feeling,—namely a want to give them all I possess, myself included. Seneca and Cicero, and Hegel and Schlegel, and the precepts of all the sages of the world about self-command and calmness, and a right medium and moderation in life, are in such hours like oil on a waterfall. Divers experiences have indeed taught me in some measure to control this rushing flood; but at certain times it asserts its right; and the hour in question was one of those periods. Nay, I was so deeply touched by my stepmother's kindness, so repentant of my own injustice, that, if she had then challenged me to give my hand to the Court Chamberlain as his future partner,—I *think* I should have assented. But thanks to my auspicious stars! She did not think of this, and I could taste undisturbed the entire sweetness of life which arises when two human hearts mingle in tenderness and affection.

In stillness I have sworn by Minerva's head never again to torment my stepmother and myself with unnecessary suspicion. I feel my heart lighter by half a ton. I hear Selma singing cheerfully. God bless the warbler! Her voice is constantly raised to celebrate the sunny hours of home. In this she resembles the vocal tribes of Sweden, that,—as Nilson informs us in his Fauna—"sing most beautifully after a gentle summer shower."

28th January.

Continued delight on my part at the bookcase, &c. Increasing contentment and satisfaction of my stepmother. Elucidation on the subject of the fate of Europe by my stepmother and myself. Brisk traffic with the ladies of the Board of Trade; they betroth, marry, strike dead, in a word, they labour at the progress of the world. Amid all this secret vexation in my spirit, I have not seen the Viking for several days. He ought assuredly to have come and announced his engagement to his lady friend.

29th January.

Walked out to-day. Met the Viking, who was angry and quarrelled with our being out constantly, and complained that I, though at home and alone, did not receive him. I grew rather vexed at this, and showed an icy expression of countenance, at which Brenner took a tolerably dry and cold farewell. Well, well!

"I care then for no one, for no one,
When nobody cares aught for me!"

Thank heaven, I can still continue to sing thus. And it is my will ever to be able to sing in this strain. I will not brook any anger, I will not unnecessarily expose myself to anger. I have had enough of it in my life, and that too on account of too great ardour of feeling. I will not now have it any longer. And therefore I will be cold and calm as the marble statues which we are going to see by candlelight this evening in the gallery of sculptures.

Eleven o'clock in the Evening.

But when between cold marble figures and the pale flames of wax tapers, we observe a beaming human eye resting upon us with the power of mild sunshine—who can then prevent the heart from growing warm and tender, the very sculpture-gallery from being transformed into a temple of the sun? Thus it was with me when, walking in the Niobe Gallery, I saw the Viking amid Roman generals and Caryatides. On encountering his

glance, I involuntarily stretched forth my hand, and at the same instant felt his warm, soothfast grasp. O still we must abide friends for ever!

Brenner, however, did not join us. He seemed to have undertaken the office of protecting two ladies, one of whom was young and very pretty. "Perhaps she is his bride," thought I. But I renounced this thought, when between the marble statues I saw his eye again and again resting on me with an expression which affected my heart with a secret pleasure. This encountering of glances, the consciousness of strong sympathy with a warm, generous heart, gave to my ramble through these marble halls, leaning on the arm of the Court Chamberlain, a peculiar and singular charm. I felt my heart beat with a full and almost even current of emotion amid these senseless statues, and perhaps still more senseless throngs, that, elegantly attired, filled the gallery, more occupied —as it seemed to me—with the beautifully illuminated apartments—the beautiful toilets, and the Queen and her court (also present), than with the masterpieces of art. But why should I censure this? I myself thought more of man than statues.

Lennartson gave his arm to my stepmother, and directed his words by preference to Selma, who looked beautiful but contemplative; while Flora, leaning on the arm of her brother, with a sort of feverish exertion seemed desirous of occupying all about her with her person and sallies. St. Orme, Baron Alexander, and some other gentlemen, followed her with applause and admiration. She was very well dressed, and looked very handsome.

In Sergel's room, as it is called, my attention was captivated by three of that artist's models, of the group of "Cupid and Psyche," for this reason: that in them are distinctly perceived the labours of the mind clearly to realise its own conceptions and obtain the mastery over that spirit which it desires to embody. In the first model the figures are clump-like, coarse, ponderous, spiritless, and like an Egyptian mask; they are connected with each other in a block-like unity. In the second group they are endowed with life and the capacity of motion; but they are destitute of harmony, beauty, and all higher kind of unity. This they do not gain before the third formation, in which the artist has achieved the victory, and the glorious figures express the conflict of human passions softened by divine majesty and beauty. I fancied I saw in these statues the history of every development, as in humanity so in the individual man; and in the gladness which this thought inspired I turned round, wanting to communicate it to somebody who could or would understand me. I saw only Flora near me, who with an expression of impatience and acrimony was listening to St. Orme's low-spoken remarks. My glance encountering hers, she said in a playful tone, quickly breaking off the conversation—

"What revelation has Sophy now had? Her eye sparkles as if she had discovered a new world!"

"Only a thought," I replied, "has dawned upon me in clearness." And, carried away by my feelings, I pointed out to them the three model-groups, and told them what reflections they had occasioned in my mind on the development and perfection of life, the patience and power of the true artist, who rests not till he has reached his goal, before he sees that his work is good.

St. Orme smiled sarcastically at my enthusiasm, but Flora listened to me with attention. She then said—

"Sergel was a happy man. He was not, like many others, impeded in the course of his development—impeded on the path of improvement by——"

She paused; I continued interrogatively—"By what?"

"By the want of a great object," pursued Flora with strong emphasis, and a bitter expression on her countenance. But I regarded the latter with joy; for in it I again recognised the thought, the expression which sometimes flashes upon Flora, and makes me augur an elevated spirit at the bottom of her enigmatical character.

St. Orme yawned aloud, and then began a reproachful critique upon the last group, which was to evince the nullity of my admiration, the imperfections of the artist, and the superiority of his own acuteness. To me this recension only betrayed St. Orme's want of generous spirit.

I felt hurt, too, at his little courteous deportment towards me; but I am so solicitous about abasing myself by paying in like coin, and allowing myself to be overpowered by a petty desire of revenge, that I listened silently to him, without giving any evidence of the displeasure I experienced. Glad I was, however, at being delivered from him by the Viking, who had planted his ladies, heaven knows in what place, and came now hastily to me in order to direct my attention to the group "Oxenstjerna and History," and the remarkably noble and vigorous-looking countenance of the great statesman. Brenner's cheerful, open look, inspired me with a feeling like that which the fresh sea-breeze excites—a feeling frequently induced in me by his presence. As for the rest, he complained of "tedium;" he could not make anything out of "those cold, lifeless figures."

It was, however, appointed that on this evening those lifeless figures should open to me the recesses of many a living one. We were in that part of the sculpture-gallery which lies towards the Logärd, where Odin stands in so commanding a posture, Endymion slumbers so sweetly, Venus toys with Love, Apollo plays on the lyre, and all the Muses are disposed around.

Here Krusenberg, the royal secretary, joined us, and making a profound obeisance before gods and men, thus delivered himself—

"Certain it is that we may say here we find ourselves in good society. We really feel ourselves to be elevated by it."

"Yes," said Baron Alexander, joining in, "here we at all events escape the inconvenience of elbowing with the common people, the rabble that throng the streets and lanes."

Such expressions I cannot endure, nor preserve silence when I hear them. I therefore answered with little courtesy—"I certainly believe that among the so-called 'common people' there are found more honourable and better men than the heathen gods. There was a deal of rabble on high Olympus."

As a weathercock on a church-steeple might

look down upon a flagstone, did the great Alexander regard me; and St. Orme said sarcastically—

"So it may appear to one who has not realised what antiquity was, and who is not able to apprehend its creations with an enlightened and unprejudiced mind. Here the catechism cannot exactly be applied as a standard. The Beautiful and the Sublime must be measured according to their own measure."

"So I think also," said Flora. "The Grecian ideal must not be brought down to the level of our every-day virtues."

I was conscious that I blushed; for I discovered that I was not on perfectly firm ground against my adversaries. I looked at Selma; she regarded Lennartson, whose quiet, clear glance rested upon and gave me spirit and strength. And I was on the point of answering, with a view more clearly to explain my meaning, when St. Orme pursued—

"I for my part know nothing which really merits our homage more than the divine gifts of *beauty*, *genius*, and *power*. I positively know nothing that could be put in competition with them. Let it not be, peradventure, those little anonymous modesties with which the earth swarms. No! if so, I beg permission to hold fast to the gods, and especially the goddesses. With them we are ever in a temple of beauty."

"Worship of Genius!" said the Baron smiling, "and in the creed of many this is very sublime and genteel. But sublimer and more befitting gentility, is that worship which looks with indifference on those splendid gifts that are circumstantial, and inquires only after what is essential in man—*the kind intentions of the will and seriousness of purpose*—who sees a chosen spirit in every man, the inheritor of a celestial home, the living breath from God, that before Him and in Him elevates himself to the citizenship of an eternal kingdom. You may do justice to the view to which the heathen attained, and still are fully warranted in ranging it in subordination to the highest, that is to say, *Christianity*."

This was obviously said for the purpose of helping me out of straits; and to my fancy the heathen divinities seemed suddenly to pale or melt into spectre-like forms, and the great Alexander to dwindle into a dwarf. Krusenberg crept behind Odin, while Selma and I looked up at Lennartson with joy. St. Orme and Baron Alexander solaced themselves with communicating to each other their low opinions of persons who made so much ado about an insignificant occurrence among insignificant people, and would attach universally historical worth to an event of more than two thousand years ago. How foolish!

I listened to the two gentlemen, and wondered that *such great learning* could be combined with *such great inanity of mind*. The truth is, that in simple servants and maids I have found a greater *depth of apprehension* for what is profound in life than in a certain description of learned men.

Some time after this we were standing in the middle of the gallery, in which is the marble group of "Cupid and Psyche." You behold Cupid in the act of forsaking Psyche in anger, while the latter kneels before him in entreaty.

"How can any one be so inexorable as Cupid in this group to a supplicant fair as is Psyche?" we heard Krusenberg here remark.

"Yes," said Flora, her eye seeking Lennartson's glance, "is it possible to repulse her who loves and entreats thus, even though she had erred?"

"He would be a real barbarian who could do so," exclaimed Krusenberg.

"I believe," said Lennartson, in a pretty loud voice, and coldly, "that there are transgressions which we cannot and dare not pardon."

"Not in a beloved one?" whispered Flora, in a voice which trembled almost imperceptibly; "not in a—bride, a consort?"

"Such a one least of all!" replied Lennartson in a low tone, but with stress, and casting a serious, penetrating look at Flora.

Not long afterwards somebody caught hastily hold of my arm, and whispered to me—

"Come with me, Sophy; I feel unwell!"

It was Flora, who looked deathly pale. But at the same moment I moved in order to go with her (Felix was with Selma, and did not observe us), at the same moment Lennartson was at her side, and he conducted us out of the throng of people.

"A little fresh air! I am choking!" stammered Flora.

Lennartson opened the door leading to the Lynx-terrace, and we soon saw the starry heavens above our heads, and the wind of the winter evening blowed cold on our cheeks.

Lennartson had one of the velvet-covered seats brought out of the gallery for Flora, gave her a glass of water to drink, and evinced the most tender care towards her. I removed some paces from them. The time and place were solemn. We stood as it were in the heart of the palace, whose high and gloomy walls encompassed us on three sides, while the fourth laid open to us the beautiful view across the harbour, with its crown of mountains and cultivated islands, all enveloped in evening twilight, illuminated only by the stars of heaven and the flickering lights of the earth. On the high terrace where we stood amid the snow-covered trees, the light from the gallery fell in broad streaks, chequered by the shade of the trees. I saw all this while my ear involuntarily took up the words which were exchanged between two mortals, who at that moment seemed to approach the crisis of their singular connexion, the decisive point of their lives.

I heard Lennartson ask something in a tender, almost affectionate voice, and Flora say in answer:

"Better, better, now, O Lennartson! for now you look mild and bright, like the sky above us, and not like those cold marble figures in the gallery."

Lennartson was silent.

Flora continued with strong emotion: "Lennartson, are you really harsh and stern as he; inexorable as your words just now seemed to indicate. O heaven, speak, how am to understand you?"

"Flora!" said Lennartson, obviously deeply moved also, "*I* it is who have for some time past directed this question to you. *I* it is who wish to understand you. If it is true that you love me.—"

"More than all in the world besides, more than my life!" said Flora, interrupting him with warmth.

"Very good," pursued Lennartson, taking her hands in his and bending over her, "if it is so, be frank, be candid towards me. Explain to me——"

"Ah! everything, everything you desire, Lennartson. But at a fitting time. Here it is—so cold."

"Cold!" Lennartson interrupted her. "That is only a pretext. Be candid, at least for once, Flora. Your hands burn. You do not feel cold at present."

"No, for my heart is warm for you, Thorsten. And therefore have patience with me. I love you so tenderly, with such child-like——yes, and on this account it is that I dread to see you serious and stern. O, if I only knew that you really loved me, then I should no longer be incomprehensible to you. O say, can you not love me thus, if it is only for my affection's sake?"

I fancied I heard affectionate tones in answer to Flora's words. I saw Lennartson bend lowly and more lowly over her, and saw——the doors of the gallery open again, and beheld my step-mother and her companions issue from them, anxiously seeking for us.

Leaning on Lennartson's arm Flora again entered the gallery. Had she now gained certain information respecting Lennartson's affections, which she did not previously possess; were words pronounced that did not reach my ear, and which remitted the galling fetters that had hitherto held her captive? Certain it is that a bright joy seemed to elevate her entire being. Never had she been more charming, never had Lennartson been more charmed with her. Selma, gentle but pale, regarded them both, while St. Orme observed them with a look of cunning inquisitiveness. That look induces me to augur that Flora's romance is still a long way from its conclusion, and that soon a fresh revolution may threaten.

1st February.

This new revolution has already come to an issue and everything is dark as ever.

This forenoon I heard a variety of strange sounds before my chamber, which seemed to proceed from persons who were violently quarrelling. I went out to see what the matter was. The little corridor which separates Flora's chamber from mine was vacant, but the door leading to her outer room stood partially open, and through this I was astonished to see Flora endeavouring to disengage her hands from those of St. Orme, who with violence held them fast.

"Ah! release your hold!" she begged earnestly. "Let me disengage them! Now it is too late! Look, the nasty spider is already upon it."

"Why must it fly into the web?" said St. Orme, with his cold sneer. "Let it alone. It will be amusing to see whether it can deliver itself and escape. If not, why—*laissez faire la fatalité.*"

"Ah! it is already the spider's prey! Poor thing! Adrian, release your hold!" (She stamped on the floor) "You are a cruel, horrid man."

"Because I do not bewail a fly? The little fool has been the author of its own fate. And who knows whether it has such sad misfortune? And the spider? who knows that it is cruel? It merely embraces the fly."

At this moment fire-tongs rose suddenly in air, and tore the spider's web asunder, and separated spider and fly. This catastrophe was occasioned by me, who, armed with the best weapon accident offered, had approached the combatants. At sight of me, St. Orme loosed his hold of Flora, and exclaimed:

"See, there comes, as from heaven, an angel of deliverance! Only, it is a pity that the noble deed has been achieved too late."

And it was too late, the fly fell dead upon the window-sill.

"But," pursued St. Orme, "Sophy can write an elegy or some moral reflections upon it, and thus it will still become a means of edification, and——"

Veiling her face with her hands, Flora rushed suddenly into her inner chamber. I followed her, and St. Orme took his departure, whistling an operatic air while on the stairs.

Flora now abandoned herself to such an outburst of violence as I had never before seen. She plucked out her hair, screamed and cast herself on the ground with convulsive sighs and tears. I stood regarding her in dumb astonishment. Where was handsome Flora then? It was a fury whom I now saw before me. I offered her a glass of water; she drank it eagerly, and then gradually became cooler.

"Excellent Flora!" said I at length, "why this? How can the fate of a fly thus——"

"A fly?" exclaimed Flora, "do you think I concern myself about that? No, I weep for myself. *I*, Sophy, *I* am this incautious, unfortunate fly. *I* it is that shall become a prey to this—— And he aware of it, the abominable,—he felt pleasure,—he delighted to see my fate prefigured in this little incident, the cruel, the horrid, the——"

"But how? Why?" I inquired, interrupting the flood of bye-names which Flora was pouring on St. Orme.

"Ask not!" she exclaimed impatiently. "I can tell nothing, and it would be of no service. Ah, why are there not in our country institutions of refuge, such as Catholic lands possess, in which you may escape from the world, yourself, and others, nay be delivered from very abasement; in which even the fallen woman, laying hold of the cross, can raise herself and under the protection of Heaven, stand before the eyes of the world purified and ennobled?"

And Flora was beautiful again as she rose up with her sparkling eyes, suffused with tears, turned towards heaven. But this elevation was but of a moment's duration. At its conclusion, she continued with renewed acrimony:

"And if he persecutes me, I will turn Catholic, nay Turk, or an adorer of the *Fétiche;* I will adore the Virgin Mary, or Mahomet, or the great Mogul, or the devil himself, or whoever will but deliver me from this man."

"Your vocation for the conventual life," said I smiling, "seems not exactly of a legitimate kind. But, Flora, I thought that you had already devoted yourself to a good and powerful spirit,—that you were Thorsten Lennartson's."

"His? Yes, with my entire soul, with all my heart, but——"

"Why do you not turn to him, with open heart, with a full confession? He would deliver you."

"So you speak! Ah, you know not——Ay, if he but loved me as I do him! But——Ah, if I knew, if I positively knew! Why are there no

longer oracles, no sibyls, no witches or soothsayers in the world, to whom one could go in one's necessity and obtain counsel, a hint or insight into futurity. But all that is agreeable is decayed. How intolerable, flat and insipid the world now is, with its order and its intelligence! It disgusts me. I am disgusted with myself. Everything is loathsome, insupportable to me. Do not stand gazing at me, Sophy! Leave me. I will not be a spectacle for you. I know you hate me, but I am now unhappy enough. Leave me at least to myself."

"No! not now. Let me have rule over you for awhile, Flora, you will then better understand my hatred. I was just preparing to go out. You accompany me and let me guide you. The snow without would fall cooling upon your heated brow." I approached and began to arrange her hair.

"Do as you will with me!" said she, holding herself quite passive. I helped her to put on her winter attire, and in silence we both went out into the open air.

It snowed and the wind blew. We proceeded down to the lowest quay on the margin of the river, and the way to the North-bridge. Flora looked upon the foaming waves.

"How they roar! How they struggle!" said she. "Look, look how the billows of the sea now strive to rise and now are pressed down by others, and in their exasperation are constrained to succumb, while the Mälar-stream rides proudly over them. The poor waves! I should like to know whether they know what is meant by sinking beneath one's self, wrestling and combating without hope of eventual victory."

"A few days hence," said I, "the lake of Mälar will perhaps have lost its power, and the contending streams will be brought into equilibrium."

"However," said Flora, "at times it happens also that the embittered waves gain the ascendancy, and lord it over the others and embitter them. There is a retribution, and may they know this!"

We were again silent; I conducted Flora across the bridge and through the streets into the town. Here are the most ancient associations in Stockholm, here is the heart of the city of Stockholm, which, too, is in form of a heart; here the blood of Swedish nobles flowed in streams at the hand of Christiern; here the streets are narrow, the lanes dark, but here too is situated the palace of Stockholm, here still at the present day stand a number of houses whose inscriptions, cut in stone, attest the strong piety which in ancient times built up the metropolis of Sweden.

It was at such a house, which has stood for centuries, and bore a verse of the psalms of David in old Swedish, over its door-way, that we came to a pause, and entered the gloomy portals, ornamented with sculpture. Flora was irresolute. "Whither are you leading me?" she asked, tarrying.

"To a witch," I answered.

"Are there still witches in Sweden?" inquired Flora, following me. "But," she pursued, rather contemptuously, "in the witches of our time, with their card and coffee-cup wisdom, I have no especial confidence."

After ascending several stairs I opened a door, and we entered a room, in which a young maiden sat at needle-work. I begged Flora here to await me, and went into another apartment, the door of which was locked. After a while I returned to Flora, and led her into the room.

I saw an expression of wonder and curiosity depicted upon her countenance, while she directed her eyes towards the figure, who in a broad, black silk garment was sitting in a great chair near the only window of the room, and the lower part of which was shaded by a green curtain. The light streamed down from the upper part of the window full upon a countenance, which seemed consumed less by age than pain, and whose strong, unhandsome features stifled every suspicion of its ever having possessed attractions, or that looks of affection could ever have rested upon it. Nevertheless, the countenance was not without sunshine. It had a pair of eyes whose glance was not common. When subjects of indifference to the possessor were spoken of, they could be unquiet, and as it were wavering. But when animated by feeling or thought (and this was of frequent occurrence), they had beams that could warm, and strength that could penetrate, for there lay great and deep earnestness therein. Her dark-brown hair, still beautiful, was put back from her high forehead. A plain lace cap of snowy whiteness circled the pale, serious, but friendly countenance. The left hand, of almost transparent delicacy, was held by the unknown one upon her breast; while in the other she had a lead pencil, with which she appeared to be making remarks upon the margin of a large Bible.

The furniture of the room was so plain, that it might have belonged to poverty, but yet everything bore an impress of cleanliness and comfort, which is not often associated with indigence. A vase with fresh flowers stood upon the table, upon which lay several books and writings; everything in the room was simple and ordinary, only the large singular-looking eyes that sparkled therein, awoke in you a persuasion that it was the abode of a powerful spirit.

Flora seemed to receive some such impression as this, when we approached the unknown, who saluted us with great friendliness, saying by way of apology:

"Pardon my not rising!" With her hand she invited us to enter, to seat ourselves on two cane-bottomed chairs near the table, and, smiling, presented to each of us a branch of blooming geranium from the flower-vase.

Her serious eyes then fixed themselves on Flora, who abased hers and seemed to struggle to escape their power. I soon withdrew to a remote part of the room, and left them both alone with each other.

I heard the unknown one say in a soft, serious voice:

"So young, so fair, and yet—not happy!"

Flora was silent for a moment, appearing to wrestle with herself. At length she said:

"No! not happy, but—who can tell me how I am to become so? If I knew any one who could tell me this, I would go to her through darkness and horrors, but oracles are vanished from the world."

"Not vanished, they have only changed their biding-place," said the unknown one with composure.

"Have changed their biding-place? And whither have they gone?"

"They have passed from the ancient temples and deserts into the most holy sanctuary of life,—have passed into the human heart."

"And to get thither," Flora sarcastically pursued, "is more difficult than to Delphi or Dordona! And what answer could this new-fashioned oracle give to my question."

"Follow the voice which is within you!"

"A genuine oracular response, that is to say, one which says nothing at all. I at all events know not of *one* internal voice, but of ten at least, which call in mingling confusion."

"We must not confide in them all, but inquire and listen most profoundly till we hear the right voice. There are quiet groves and silent temples in the heart—therein we must enter—in them our genius speaks."

The unknown one said this with a smile, and in a friendly and penetrating manner. She seemed to take pleasure in the images she had called forth.

I fancied that, on hearing these words, a certain degree of calmness had diffused itself over Flora's passionate spirit. With a sigh and a tearful eye she said:

"Ah! that one could flee to that still region and there find rest! That one could escape from the world, and one's self!"

"We ought not to flee, we have only—in stillness to collect ourselves to reflection, but with a view to prepare for a great object in life."

The thought which Flora had expressed at Sergel's artistical group, seemed to awake within her; her look became animated.

"Ah!" said she, "I have at times had anticipations and thoughts, but—it is now too late. The flower that has lost its rooting, can no longer maintain a firm hold; it must drift before wave and wind."

"It is never too late," said the unknown one, with stress. "But it may often be a matter of sufficient difficulty. Ah! I know it well—the flower without a rooting—this absence of soil and stability—which is usually the result of a wrong education. No way is more difficult than that of collecting one's self from dissipation of mind, and returning to one's self again. But the course does subsist, notwithstanding, and we can pursue it."

At this moment a sunbeam broke through the window, and streamed, gently quivering, through the flowers in the vase, on to the leaves of the Holy Book which lay on the table. The regards of the unknown one followed the course of the light upwards, and sparkled with great joy, while she uttered in broken sentences:

"No! it is never too late to pursue the bright career which unites heaven and earth, and man with man, in noble aspirations and exertions. It is more rich and diversified in our days than ever, spreading in all directions——in every sphere——and the eyes of men become more and more open, nor does Love ever deny her guiding hand! Courage only, and a firm resolution!——and the apparently rootless flower will gain firm hold, and bloom beautiful in eternal sunshine."

Flora did not follow her. The more the spirit of the unknown one rose to light, the more did Flora's appear to sink, and look down into a dark abyss.

"And in the end," said she, "all is still vanity. The life of every human being has its worm, against which no power can prevail. Earlier or later, the time comes for each and all, when there is an end of all enjoyment, when we succumb to pain, to old age, and to death. Is there no power, nor bliss, which can countervail this? Yes! allow one who is dying to assure you there is. Mark you! I am advancing very rapidly towards my transformation, and great are my pains; yet I am so happy that I needs must sing praises day and night. Many a sweet draught has life presented to me, much that was bitter has been changed into sweet, but still *the best wine* is preserved for me at the end."

"Lots are differently cast for us here in the world," said Flora, not without acrimony. "Some seem created for unhappiness, others, again, as you, have sunshine and happiness from the cradle to the grave. And to these it must be an easy matter to be pious."

"You would perhaps think otherwise, if you really knew me," said the unknown one, gently, "and a look into my breast would enable you to judge if that life has been ever illuminated with sunshine——and yet you would only see a picture of torments which no human eye has seen, and which I myself have now—almost forgotten. The embittered waves have long ceased to beat, but they have left a trace behind——"

She opened her black garment, removed a white handkerchief, and showed us——a thrilling sight! The bloody picture was soon veiled again.

"Pardon me!" said the unknown one to Flora, who with an exclamation of horror had covered her eyes, "and now be not alarmed! I feel that the pains are coming upon me. I shall not be able to suppress all complaining. But be not terrified, it will soon be over."

At the same moment she convulsively grasped a roll of paper, the whole body trembled, and a deathly hue spread itself over her countenance, which, amid hollow wailings, she sank upon her breast. This lasted for about ten minutes, at the expiration of which the hyena of pain seemed to loose the sufferer from its claws, but she was evidently not entirely restored to consciousness; her spirit seemed to wander in distant regions, while her lips spoke incoherent words, similar to those which Asaria sang in the fiery furnace.

Gradually the high-wrought expression of countenance was diminished. Slumber, as it were, passed over it. The unknown one then opened her eyes; they were clear, and indicated full consciousness. She took up a little mirror which lay on the table and viewed herself in it. "It has passed away!" said she, as to herself, and smiled up to heaven with a grateful look. She now seemed for the first time to remember that she was not alone.

"It is now over," said she, again turning her languid eyes to Flora and me; "I crave your pardon, but I know for a certainty that you will grant it. Pity me not! I am happy! ineffably happy!"

I rose in order to put an end to our visit.

"Permit me to come again," Flora begged with tearful eyes, as she took farewell.

"Willingly," answered the unknown one, fixed an expiring, but friendly look upon us, and affectionately stretched out her hands.

We went.

"Who is she?" Flora asked while descending the stairs.

"She wishes not to be known," I answered, after which we both remained silent till we reached home.

Upon my going down to dinner, I heard my young sister (who knew nothing of the revolution in the forenoon) thus giving orders in the saloon: "Trala, la, la! Jacob put the dishes this way! Do not forget to go to the old coachman immediately after dinner, with the cake and the bottle of wine here! And on your way back you are to bring some of the pastry, which as you know, my mother likes.——You, Ulla, remember now that you get Miss Flora's dress ready this evening. You must be prodigiously industrious. La, la, la, li, la, la, la! And to-morrow you shall make merry. You shall go to the opera to see 'The May-day,' then you may have pleasure with decorum. Jacob shall be protector to Ulla and Karin. Tralaleli, laleli, la la la!"

Thus these harmonious commands were continued for a while, and they afforded me another little proof that it is my sister Selma's endeavour in this world to make all about her happy: but *endeavour* is not the right word. When kindness has attained to its perfection it becomes an inward harmony, an ennobled disposition whose motions are as spontaneous and as beautiful as those of Taglioni, in "La Sylphide." It makes easy what is most difficult, and lends a charm to the most trifling affairs of life.

At dinner Flora was thoughtful and gloomy. In the afternoon Lennartson called and had a long interview with her alone: he seemed earnestly and zealously to entreat something of her. She wept much: at length I heard her say with vehemence:—

"Not now, not yet, Lennartson. Have patience with me for some time, and I will then tell you all, and you will see that it is you alone in this world whom I love."

Lennartson then rose with a strong expression of dissatisfaction. He seemed impatient, and went into the ante-chamber, where Selma and I were sitting. The sun shone through the crystals of the chandelier, and hundreds of little prismatic rays quivered upon the walls, and the pictures with which they were covered. Selma made some observations on the beauty of the colours, and the impression which their clearness produced on the mind.

"Yes," said Lennartson aloud, directing his eyes towards her, "Light, and *purity* is beautiful, as in colour, so in the human heart. I cannot comprehend how people can like darkness, or wish to continue in it. They must in such a case have something to conceal, and therefore suspiciously fear the light."

Flora had approached us, but remained standing in the doorway, against the posts of which she reclined, holding her hand pressed upon her breast and fixing a look of bitter suffering on the speakers. Selma observed it, and tears came into her beautiful eyes: with sprightliness and almost reproachingly she said to Lennartson:

"Clouds indeed often veil the sun from our view, and yet he abides equally bright. Could we but raise ourselves above those clouds we should perceive this."

Lennartson regarded Selma with an inquiring look, which gradually melted into tenderness.

"Yes, you are right," said he slowly, "the fault may lie in him who complains."

He went again to Flora, seized her hand, bent over her, and pronounced some words to her which I did not hear, but I observed their effect in Flora's grateful look. Lennartson left us shortly afterwards.

2nd February.

Flora is more composed, and everything in the house is still. I begin to be satisfied with the polemical connection which subsists between my stepmother and myself. But shall we ever attain to such perfection of controversy as the German professors, Feurbach and Grolmann, have exhibited? These two distinguished men were most confidential friends, and in the early part of their life of the same way of thinking. At a later period they differed in their scientific views, but without allowing this to disturb their personal respect and friendship. Without interruption they dedicated to each other works in which they unceasingly strove to convert each other. Thus they disputed in affection and through the medium of excellent books to the end of their days. At such a controversy the angels must rejoice.

3rd February.

My acquaintance with the Viking begins to be rather stormy: but I console myself with the thought that "tempests are also part of God's providence,"* and may be ruled by His spirit.

Yesterday we breakfasted with the Court-Chamberlain. Without flattering myself and being all too conceited, I could well perceive the correctness of my stepmother's hints—namely, that this *déjeûner* was given on my account. The host obviously did me "*les honneurs*" of his beautiful house—his splendid furniture, his Athénienne with a thousand little costly things, his numerous contrivances for securing convenience and a comfortable enjoyment of life; nay, even his own precious toilet I was compelled to look at. While thus rambling through the rooms with him I sought in vain for a picture of real and intrinsic worth or an object of high interest. I discovered nothing of this sort, and of the other precious things I could not say a great deal.

William Brenner's look was frequently directed watchfully upon me, while I was thus engaged by my host's civilities. He, on the other hand, was occupied with a very handsome young lady, Madame Z * *, a rich widow, her whom I met in company with him at the Museum. "Z," says a writing-copy, "is a superfluous letter in the Swedish language"; and in this light did Madame Z. appear to me at our breakfast. I might have inferred from the absent looks of the Viking that such too were his thoughts; but he continued near her, notwithstanding, and contented himself with observing me at a distance. This put me a little out of temper, and therefore I suffered myself to be more than ordinarily amused by the witty sallies of my polite uncle, said some merry things myself, and contributed my share to the enlivenment of the company, for which I reaped great applause, especially at the hands of my stepmother.

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* Geiger.

About two o'clock they separated, and prepared to return home.

As the weather was fine, we walked. I saw Madame Z. promenading at the side of the Viking. The Court Chamberlain accompanied us, the other gentleman also.

We had hardly descended the hill near the palace when the Viking came on in full sail from the direction of the floating-bridge and joined our party. He was very warm, and dried his forehead.

The Court Chamberlain was at my left side, Brenner took my right arm, and heard how—I ridiculed love.

But that which he did not hear was the occasion of my satirical sallies,—the sighs and mournful lays of my uncle on his love, and the flame of his heart—which made me feel very cold, because I knew their end and aim.

"I believe," said I, "that people have never talked so much about love and known so little of it as at the present time. Those who speak so loudly in public about Christian love, tear each other to pieces most bitterly; and as to that love which men profess to ladies, its motives are of very dubious worth. How many tender flames (which are rather smoke than flame) have their origin merely in people's feeling tedium and seeking to enliven themselves in some way or other? is it not so in glowing Italy, as you yourself have narrated to me? do not people there form '*liaisons*,' merely to beguile time, and continue in them because they have nothing else to enter upon? and thus they drag lamentably on through life with sighing and drinking lemonade; in our North we do certainly seek rather more substantial sustenance for love—the good things which lay open a prospect of a comfortable life, good dinners, suppers, and the like. But still the motive is not better, and the affection just as—needy."—

"Have you, then, never seen or lighted upon a *true affection* on earth?" asked the Viking, in a tone which betokened alike displeasure and compassion on me.

"Unquestionably," I pursued in the same vein, "unquestionably I have seen men who felt real love, nay, really wasted away in consequence, and when they met with a hard heart in the object of their affection have heard them protest that their life was consumed by a worm, and that people would soon have to bewail their death. Yes, I believe that they themselves really thought thus for a while; but certain it is that a year or a few years later, I have seen the same men wedded to other objects than those for whom they were going to die, and in good case, and sprightly withal. In a word I have seen enough of life and the world to have as little faith in that love which is so very much talked about and lauded so highly in romances, as I have desire to have anything at all to do with it. It is not worth one of the sighs which it costs us."

"*Femme philosophe!*" exclaimed the Court Chamberlain, "you are reasoning perfectly '*justement*' on the passion in question. I think equally little of it. Respect, *délicatesse*, reciprocal *condescendance*, form the basis of far more lasting happiness than—"

We were just on the point of stepping on the Norr-bridge when it suddenly occurred to Flora that she had to purchase something at Medberg's; my stepmother and Selma had the same desire. I, however, having no such intention, but, on the contrary, wishing to get home, declared that I would continue my way alone, and await the party at our house. I seriously rejected my uncle's offer to accompany me back, and on my companions turning off towards the Mint I pursued my course over the bridge alone.

But scarcely had I advanced twenty paces before I saw the Viking at my side, and found—I know not how—my arm resting in his. He made head with desperate steps, so that I could only follow him with difficulty. At that part where the bridge widens to the right, he bent suddenly away, and stopped at the angle beneath which the river roars on, and the poplars of the parterre on the bank of the stream rear their heads up to the granite balustrades. Here he loosened his hold of my arm, turned towards me with a look of anger, and said with warmth, but in a subdued voice—

"Tell me, is all that to which you just gave utterance, that accursed gallimaufry about love, your full earnest?"

"My full earnest!" I exclaimed.

"That I will not believe," he pursued with warmth, "or I pity you from my inmost heart. In Heaven's name, how can you so mistake and contemn what is most high and holy in life? When I hear such sentiments, I cannot help being rude. How can people be so narrow-minded, nay, I must say so *stupid*, and view things so askance, in so false, so totally false a light! I grow angry when I hear a woman, who is created to love and be loved, so mistake her own nature and vocation, allow herself to be so deluded by the petty, paltry doings of life, as to confound them with that emotion for which the mind has no conception, and the tongue no expression, but which subsists as certainly on earth as in heaven, and is moreover the only state of feeling in which we can comprehend the spirit of what alone imparts worth to life! Harangues about knowledge and philosophy which are to ennoble the heart and life! They are absolutely insignificant in comparison with the ennobling power of a pure love."

"This is indeed a most singularly chosen place to hold a *tête-à-tête* and preach a sermon on love," thought I, internally smiling, as I regarded the vehement gestures of Brenner and the crowd of passengers, both on the foot-path and carriage-way, who moved about us, and of whom the Viking in his wrath seemed entirely heedless. A little startled at his deportment towards me I assuredly was, but he pleased me notwithstanding. I looked upon the boisterous waves beneath me, gazed at the boisterous spirit before me, and I know not what kind of fresh breeze appeared to pass through my heart. I was still silent, when Brenner continued in the same strain as before:

"And that wretched glass-case discretion, which makes a man coop himself up in a cage for fear of his life, breathe out his vital energy in the warmth of the stove from fear of the fresh air, and reduce his soul to a monotonous level from fear of strong feelings and passions—tell me, how can you endure this? It is in truth fallacious as pitiable; and is good for nought, I maintain."

And the Viking struck his clenched fist on the

balustrades with such force, that they would have trembled had they not been of stone.

As I continued to stand there like Lot's wife when converted into a pillar of salt during the shower of fire, and seized with a strange feeling, he pursued with increasing warmth—

"Tell me——I should like to know what or who it is that has inspired you with such distrust of life and men, nay our Lord himself? Is it your be-praised philosophy? why, cast it into the stream!"

In the vehement action of arm with which Brenner accompanied these words, he struck against my reticule that rested on the balustrade; it fell into the river, and was rapidly borne along into the sea.

At this catastrophe and the Viking's look of consternation, my state of immovability was at once remitted and resolved into a hearty laugh. As Brenner seemed hastening, however, to take measures for the recovery of the reticule, I held him back, and said—

"Take no concern about the reticule! There are only a few rennets in it, which will suffer shipwreck with it. I do not care aught for it. Only let your anger drift on to the ocean with it, for, in truth, you do me wrong."

"I do you wrong? Well, thank God for that!" exclaimed Brenner, with a look which touched me deeply.

I continued—

"Yes, for notwithstanding that what I just now expressed, and at which you are so enraged, is my sincere opinion, still I have my reservation in this matter. I distinguish between *amor* and *eros;* but I have seen more of the former than the latter in life, and *that* it was of which I really spoke."

"But you have faith in the other?"

"That I have. I mean, I believe generally in the truth and depth of the feeling of which you speak; but in particular cases, experience has taught me to be distrustful. However, I thank you for the proof of friendship you have now given me. Ah, let me think of love as I will; in friendship I do believe, and feel that we are friends."

And with this I took his arm, and began to advance towards our residence. The Viking replied—

"Love, friendship, can they be thus separated? And how can we doubt of the one and have faith in the other?"

This question I did not choose to answer, and our conversation was now interrupted by our being overtaken by the company we had left behind. They regarded us with some astonishment, and said different things about our "inconceivably rapid journey home."

The Viking replied—

"Miss Sophia lost her purse or reticule in the river."

But in what manner it was lost he did not say. They began to deliberate on recovering it, and the Viking—now in good temper—made several break-neck and impracticable proposals.

5th February.

But a far more handsome reticule—inclosing a bouquet of myrtles and roses—which he says was fished up from the stream in this condition, has been given me.

"The *water-spirit* must desire to talk to you about his love in the language of these flowers," said the Viking, and eagerly awaited the answer he would receive.

I said—"Only a thousand thanks."

"And in the event of his not being satisfied with that?" asked Brenner.

"He shall take back his flowers," I replied, half in jest, half in earnest.

"You would be constrained to cast them into the stream," rejoined the Viking quite seriously. "Do you not dread to wound and hurt him? You could be harsh, unforbearing——"

"You forget," said I, breaking short the sentence, "that the water-spirit and his feelings are a fiction, and I am no longer of an age when people believe those things; still less am I able to comprehend why a clever jest—which is a very courteous and agreeable thing, and for which I thank you very much—should be taken so seriously.

The Viking was silent, but looked discontented. I begin to fear the man has a very bad temper.

7th February.

And a multitude of faults he discovers in me. To-day he has reproached me with my obstinacy, or "*finnish*hood," as he calls it. I told him that this was precisely my best quality, and on his shaking his head, I informed him that I was descended from the family of Wasastjerna, which had given to the world one of the finest examples of the Finnish national character. When the Russians subjugated Finnland in the year 1809, there lived two brothers in the city of *Wasa*—the one a Justice (Lagman) of the High Court of Judicature, the other a merchant—who, when the inhabitants of that city were compelled to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor of the Russians, alone persisted in refusing to do so.

"We have sworn fidelity to the King of Sweden, and inasmuch as he does not absolve us from fealty to him, we cannot pledge our obedience to another ruler," was their constant answer to all exhortations, whether friendly or denunciatory. Enraged at this obstinacy, and fearing the example it might be to others, the Russians cast the stiff-necked brothers into prison, threatened them with death. Here, too, notwithstanding the increasing rigour and the threats of their persecutors the answer of the two brothers was constantly the same.

At last the authorities apprised them that sentence of death had been pronounced upon them, and that on an appointed day they would be led out to the place of execution and there put to death like criminals, unless they remitted their stubbornness and took the oath of allegiance. The brothers were unshakeable in their resolve: "We prefer," the justice answered in the name of both, "we prefer death to perjury."

At these words a sturdy hand fell on the speaker's shoulder. It was that of the Cossack who kept watch over the prisoners, and with sparkling eyes he exclaimed: "Dobbra, Camerad!" *

But the Russian authorities spoke in a different strain, and on the appointed day caused the brothers to be led out to the place of judgment. They

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* Bravo, Comrade.

were condemned to be hanged ; but once more, at the last hour and for the last time, *grace* was offered to them, if they would accede to what was required of them.

"No," they answered, "hang us ! hang us ! We are not come here to parley, but to be hanged."

This constancy softened the hearts of the Russians. Admiration took the place of harshness, and they rewarded the fidelity and courage of the brothers with generosity. They not only bestowed their life upon them, but sent them free and in security to Sweden, to the king and people whom they had been so faithful to, in the face of death even.

The King of Sweden conferred a patent of nobility upon them, and they subsequently lived generally respected in the metropolis, till a very advanced age.

This story gave Brenner pleasure. With a bright and moist eye he promised never again to reproach me with my "finnishhood."

9th February.

"Surprise" alike on my part and that of my stepmother, but not in the manner she anticipated. For it did not at all startle me, when my stepmother with an air of secrecy conducted me into her closet this morning and appeared in the capacity of "*envoyé extraordinaire, ministre plénipotentiaire*" of my uncle the Court Chamberlain, with a view to negociate an alliance between him and me. But that my stepmother should say not a word to persuade me to become a party to this connection was really what I did not expect. On the contrary, she expressed several fine and to me particularly agreeable things about "this important step," and the danger of advising in favour of or against it. She desired only my happiness, I myself should choose what could lead me to this. On the one hand, we might certainly feel persuaded that, with a man like the Court Chamberlain, and in the *état* in which a union with him would place me, I should be happy ; but, on the other side, it was also certain that unmarried and in my present condition of life, I should no less find myself very well. Her home should ever be mine, she would ever feel gratified and happy to see me in it, &c. In the present instance she had taken upon herself the office, not of *wooing* in behalf of the Court Chamberlain, but merely of ascertaining beforehand whether he could present himself to me as a hopeful suitor. This caution on his part pleased me exceedingly, for I could decline his offer in the same manner, and thus escape the unpleasantness of pronouncing a word which is repugnant to my nature—that little annoying "No."

However, he has been friendly towards me, has evinced kindness and confidence. I am sorry that I cannot rejoice him, nay, that, probably, I hurt him. We are indeed poor creatures here in this nether world ! I feel quite melancholy and humiliated.

10th February.

And thou, honourable William Brenner, shalt still less hear from me that word of refusal ! I now comprehend thy object very well ; but thou shalt not express aloud what I cannot answer according to thy wishes ; thou shalt not stretch forth thy warm and trusty hand to see it rejected ; I esteem thee too highly, think too much of thee to allow that. Yes, I think a great deal of Brenner, but not so much as of my independence, peace of mind and prospects of a tranquil life in future, unincumbered with cares. I will be his friend, nothing farther. I fear the married state, I dread that oppression, and gloomy, deep suffering which often proceeds from one being having authority over another. I have seen so much of it.

I am well aware that, pursuant to the wise legislation of our evangelical Church, marriage is no indissoluble tie, but can be severed in various ways, and hence, too, the controversy which is heard from certain quarters against matrimony and married life, is the most absurd and unnecessary I am acquainted with. For what pure-minded and thinking man concludes a matrimonial alliance without a serious desire to view it—in the beautiful language of our formulary for the marriage ceremony—as a public declaration on our part of our acknowledging it to be instituted by God, and therefore to be regarded as a law and rule on earth ? If He who spake but once or twice to the children of the earth, and then left it to them to unfold the meaning of his words, if he had not confirmed this view of the sanctity of marriage, which in the earliest times was instituted in man's innocency—yet human forethought alone, looking at the children that are its fruit, would have led to the adoption of this law and ordinance for marriage. The marriage ceremony, which is to awaken in the parties united a consciousness of the significancy and object of such connection, raises them thereby to a height of moral greatness from which they can easily vanquish the accidental provocations which occur in the married state. And certainly this connexion would make a far greater number of people happy, if they allowed themselves to be initiated through matrimony into its sublime and hallowed object. Nay, if ever mankind shall advance to such a height of moral greatness that marriage may be relieved of all legal fetters, why, precisely because of such greatness they will—hold fast to the marriage ceremony.

I am, moreover, aware that the wife is frequently the cause of unhappiness in wedlock ; I know, too, that many a lady is the shoe which pinches her husband's foot ; and to the reverential fear and warning of all wicked wives, I will here communicate to them what recently took place in my neighbourhood.

An honest, industrious young man, and whose industry had secured him a competency, with a wife and three children, poisoned himself, some days back, by taking arsenic. During the dreadful effect it occasioned, the wife in her anxiety was preparing to give him some sweet milk. But he repulsed her away from him, saying :—

"Let me die in peace. For some years past you have gnawed me as rust on iron; I can live no longer."

The wife, however, let him enjoy no rest even in his last hour, but overwhelmed him with reproaches, and asked :

"Do you not perceive that you have committed a grievous sin against me and my poor children ?"

"It was your will it should be so," he harshly replied, and gave up the ghost.

Listen, ye wives !

Not the less, gentlemen, is it certain that the

sufferings which *I* have seen in the wedded state have sprung mainly from *you;* and therefore I will neither take to myself a *lord* and *master* nor become a wife.

And shall I in consequence live less to the service of human society? Folly and view of fools? Lady friend, kinswoman, fellow-citizen — noble names and duties! O, that one could satisfactorily discharge them!

11th February.

A sledge-party again in question, and Lennartson and Brenner are the proposers. Lennartson wishes to drive Flora, and methinks he wishes to make this excursion a source of pleasure to her, and will endeavour to approach her nearer. He evidently is closely vigilant over her temper, and for some days past this has been perturbed to a great degree.

The Viking has made me an offer of his sledge, and I have accepted it, but on condition of his eldest daughter, Rosina, a dear creature, accompanying us. To this he assented only on compulsion. I cannot allow myself to undertake so long a drive *tête à tête* with the Viking, but I will avail myself of the first opportunity which offers bluntly to ward off his schemes of conquest and to communicate to him my resolution to abide independent, and to let the pulse of friendship, not love, beat in my heart.

Selma has declared in a cheerful way that nobody shall drive her, but that she will go with her mother in her new sledge and beautiful Isabella-coloured horses. And this is definitive. The procession will comprise some fifty sledges. Selma and Flora are rejoicing at the prospect of the excursion like—young maidens. The gentlemen are garnishing their vehicles with handsome tiger skins. We have been talking of nothing else for this week past. If the weather is but propitious.

15th February.

Such an excursion of pleasure, in the clear wintry air, beneath the blue sky and along the snow-covered earth, is a genuine northern recreation and has northern spirit in it. They bound away so light and merrily, those open sledges, covered with skins, while the white nets flutter about the fiery horses mantled with hoar frost; onward they bound so lightly to the jingling of their bells. And it gives such irresistible buoyancy to the spirits to drive thus along on the earth in a procession of cheerful people, and at the side of a friend who participates in every feeling and impression.

I felt all this yesterday, and yet to-day only a disquieting impression of our pleasure excursion is left upon my mind. Thus it is with the joys of the world.

But at the commencement it was superb. Our course resembled a triumphal procession while we were passing through the principal streets of the city, gazed at and admired by a crowd of people both within and outside the houses. And then, on our advancing through the gate into the suburbs, how the white snow-fields glanced, how fine was the roar of the forests of fir and pine trees, how we flew, as if by magic, over plain and lake, while their rocky, wood-crowned margins whistled hurriedly by. I was cheerful and enraptured, Brenner rejoiced at my delight, and the sweet girl between us enhanced our pleasure by her childlike joy.

After a tolerably long drive we stopped before an inn by the fountain of the zoological gardens, and took dinner there. It was already served up when we arrived, and splendid and cheerful things were there, but without that offensive display and excess which ought to be entirely banished from the society of thinking beings. Our hosts, Lennartson and Brenner, were the life and joy of the table. Songs, too, were sung, and in these the Viking's voice produced great effect. When our friendship has advanced a little more in intimacy, I will advise him to subdue it a little.

After dinner, Lennartson asked me to play a figure-Polska, which instantly set the entire party in brisk motion with its grotesque but pretty evolutions and tableaux. Even aunt Penderfelt stood up and wheeled around with the rest. Flora and Selma both distinguished themselves by their vivacity and grace, but in a different manner. At last we were obliged to think of our return and cooling ourselves before entering upon it.

A part of the company were already preparing to depart, when Brenner directed my attention to two portraits which hung in the room. The one represented the great Queen Elizabeth of England, the other the noble Princess Elizabeth of Thüringen.

"Which of those would you like to be?" asked Brenner.

In a playful tone I put a return question: "Have you ever heard of anybody who, on being asked whether he would have warm or cold milk, made answer: 'If I might trouble you for beer-curds*.'" I must now reply to you almost in the same manner, for I am very glad that I need not be either of these Elizabeths, and prefer to abide what I am, though an insignificant personage."

Brenner smiled and said: "But if you were compelled to choose between those two persons—could you feel any hesitation? How beautiful is the self-sacrificing, affectionate woman beside the cold, politic egotist!

"That I grant," was my answer. "But the question ever is *what* a woman loves, and *for whom* she sacrifices herself. Thus, for the sake of illustration, it has always appeared to me as if exclusive love to *one individual being* were too trifling an end for the citizen of an eternal kingdom. And it is my belief that he who centres his affections exclusively in one single object, one individual, fails to possess the noblest things which life offers."

"O, how circumscribed and inconceivably perverse is this view of things!" exclaimed the Viking.

"Not so circumscribed as you imagine," said I, in some measure hurt, "after what I have seen of life. I have seen many a young maiden richly gifted, with a heart open to all that is good and beautiful in human life, and firmly resolved to do her utmost to advance it—some years after her marriage I have seen the same young lady, shrunk up in a narrow circle of cares and pleasures, continue to lose her public spirit, her interest in the welfare of mankind at large, and retire more and more into her private and isolated sphere, till she at length entirely lost sight of her high aim, and

* Milk into which beer is poured.

could scarcely lift her eyes above the threshold of her own house."

"But my excellent, gracious madam," exclaimed the Viking, "that is indeed an entirely mistaken view—downright raving—an entirely perverse tendency!—And why should we therefore overlook what is true and legitimate? If a young lady throws herself away upon a poltroon, a mere clump, or any other monstrosity, why, she must needs withdraw to some retreat in character with it; and I am not to blame for it, still less is love, in its true acceptation, impeached. For real affection is *that* which, while it knits two beings together, at the same time connects them in more intimate union with society and mankind generally; matrimony in its true import consecrates a man to a higher and more affluent world; *that* is a true home in which the fear of God presides as an invisible spirit and makes all its inmates active, each in proportion to his abilities and gifts, in the service of the great home—the world. This is indeed clear as noon-day! I cannot conceive why people will look askance on these things, and then declaim against them from their wrong point of view. This does in truth appear narrow-minded to me, and pardon me if I say—*a little stolid.*"

"I do pardon you!" I answered with a smile. "For I now begin to accustom myself to your styling me stupid; and, moreover, your delineation of those connections in their beauty touches me. But such unions are seldom found on earth, and I have not yet seen such in my career. On the contrary, I have seen and heard such bitter things about the domestic life of the nuptial state, that I dread it, and have for my own part resolved not to allow myself to be bound to it, but to live independent, in the persuasion that thus I can best fulfil my vocation as a human creature."

"That you would not!" said Brenner with great decision; "you mistake yourself. You are still young and full of spirit, the world still makes advances to you, you are still surrounded with agreeable things; but a time will come when the world will be cold for you, when you yourself will grow cold, and freeze for want of warm hearts and dear ties which bind you to life on earth."

"I hope that, through God's power, I shall neither grow cold nor freeze," I replied with a smile. "The human heart, too, has its sun, which sheds its light above all that is earthly; besides—why should I want a warm heart as long as my own is warm? And at present that feels as if it would not freeze, even though all the snow in the world were accumulated upon it."

During the progress of this conversation, we had come into the front room of the house, in which a multitude of people were wrapping themselves in furs. The light of the full moon illuminated the landscape, which, from the height on which we stood, spread out in wintry magnificence. But all was frigid and covered with snow. The trees sparkled with ice-crystals in the cold moonlight. The air was keen. An involuntary shudder thrilled through me.

The Viking had taken my fur cloak from the servant, and warmed it on his breast.

"The snow of life," said he in a low and tender tone, "O that one could preserve you from it!"

He wrapped the mantle about me, but it was not *this* which made me sensible of a gentle embrace, warm as a summer breeze.

We were soon again seated in the sledge, but the company had separated, and drove back towards the city in small parties. Lennartson and Brenner set off together, and behind them came my stepmother with Selma and Madame Rittersvärd in covered sledges. We were the last of the procession, because our two hosts deemed it their duty to await the departure of all their guests.

Having had our attention called to the fact that the ice was not too strong, it was agreed, in the passage over the lake, to keep the sledges from twenty to thirty paces distant from each other.

The moonlight was beautiful, and beautifully too did it illuminate the white plains and dark banks. Far before us in the fore-ground we saw the lights of Stockholm glimmering. The scene was romantic, but its effects were lost to me. Little Rosina soon fell asleep, with her head reclining on my breast, and the Viking availed himself of the opportunity thus offered to direct the conversation upon a theme I dreaded, and therefore avoided by a few dry and cold answers. He was vexed and said some bitter things to me, at which I was silenced. At length he became silent too. We were both out of temper, and with a feeling of melancholy I contemplated the objects on the shores as they hurried by, the gloomy sky and the dark pine-tree wood, which here and there rose out of the ice, indicating the open places, and, in the thickening twilight, resembling horrid fantastical figures of men and animals. Some words of Brenner's had wounded my heart, the dreary impression of the scene made them more deeply felt, —I could not forbear weeping, but quite softly. I know not whether he presaged what was going forward in me; but after a while he addressed me in a tender voice:

"I have been rude again? Forgive me! Do not be angry with me, dear, dear Miss Sophia."

Softly he laid his hand in mine. I pressed it without answering, for at that moment I was not able to speak. Farther communication was prevented by a hollow cry of distress, which penetrated to our ears, and we could distinguish a child's voice weeping piteously.

Brenner stopped.

"Perhaps somebody who has driven into a hole in the ice," said he. "I must see what it is. Will you suffer me to transfer you and Rosina into your stepmother's sledge? I will come back as soon as possible."

"We will put the little girl in it," I replied, "but shall *I* separate from you when I may probably render you some sort of service. No, I will accompany you." The Viking made no answer. We looked about for my stepmother's sledge, and I was seized with an anxious, gloomy feeling, when we were not able to discover it.

At this moment two double-seated sledges came sweeping impetuously over the ice from that part whence the cry was heard to proceed. In the first one were two raging and noisy gentlemen, whose voices and manner of managing the horse, plainly intimated that they were not in a proper condition. They drove so vehemently against our horse that probably misfortune would have resulted from it, if Brenner had not hastily snatched the animal out of the way. A dark cloud veiled the

moon, and the deep twilight prevented our distinguishing the countenances of the vociferous gentlemen, but by their language I fancied I could recognise the Rutschenfelts. The other sledge paused for a moment, and a voice, which seemed to me to be that of Felix Delphin, cried:

"Stop, stop! I do still believe that we have driven over the young one."

"Ah, gossip!" replied the other, who was St. Orme, I would lay a wager: "He has only got a bang—I would take my oath of it. Let the accursed youngster bellow if he fancies it, and us drive on farther; let loose the reins then, else we shall arrive too late, and the others will carry off the best of the treat: mark, now, he is quiet, let them go!"

And the sledge whistled by us in the direction of the city.

(N.B. the gentlemen whom I thought I here recognised, had declined participating in our pleasure excursion, under the pretext that they were already engaged on that day.)

While preparing to drive to that part in which the cries were still heard, though fainter and more faint, we perceived that Lennartson was also going thither, and heard Flora anxiously exclaim:

"Of a certainty the ice is broken in that spot, and we shall all go down together."

Lennartson, resigning the reins to the servant, sprang out of the sledge, and called out to us to stop, and take him with us. We drew up, he vaulted on to the beam of the sledge, and we drove rapidly onward.

We were speedily at the place where faint wailings were still audible. There the moon shed her light on a strange group. A young lady in the most elegant winter dress, and white silk bonnet, with bright red feathers, stood bending over a meanly clad boy, whom a servant was lifting gently from the ice; a tall old man with a staff in his hand, stood near, straining his sightless eyes up to heaven. The young lady was Selma, who, having heard the cries of distress before we heard them, and perceiving all the other sledges pass on, had prevailed upon her mother instantly to drive towards this part in order to ascertain whether they could afford any assistance. My stepmother stopped close at hand with her sledge.

The old man related that two sledges had come up so rapidly that he and the boy had not been able to get out of their way; the first had thrown the boy down, and the second passed over him, and despite their cries had pursued its course. The aged man himself did not appear to have sustained any injury, but the boy was hurt very much, and, after we had bound his wounds in the best manner we could with our pocket-handkerchiefs, Lennartson bore him into my stepmother's vehicle, where he was surrendered to Selma's charge. A servant was instructed to accompany the blind man to his house in the Zoological Gardens, but the latter was not willing to separate from his boy, who, since the death of his children—the boy's parents—had been his only solace and stay. He therefore obtained permission to take his place beside the coachman, and accompany us.

We all then turned round in the direction of home, and on our way met Flora, who came driving slowly towards us. Lennartson resumed his seat beside her, but it is my belief that the return journey was not particularly agreeable to either.

The same evening Lennartson fetched a surgeon to the boy, and this morning he was placed in the hospital. He is considerably hurt, but fortunately his wounds are not dangerous, and in a month he will probably be perfectly recovered; in the meanwhile he is Selma's and my patient.

The Viking and Lennartson have adopted the old man, whose eye-malady is said to be such that he may be subjected to an operation and receive his sight again.

Flora pouts her lip and looks askance at the whole affair, and the common interest between Selma and Lennartson which has resulted from their *protégé;* while the opposite conduct of the two young ladies on this occasion appears to have made a strong impression upon the Baron.

17th February.

I have endeavoured to elicit from Felix intelligence of the passage over the frozen lake and its adventures. He feigned perfect ignorance and wonder, but a kind of painful confusion in his manner convinces me that I have not done injustice to him and the rest. I have heard from Ake Sparrsköld that St. Orme often allures young people to drink and then game, and thus wins their money from them; and that, the day on which the sledging excursion took place, he had invited Felix and his friends to an orgie of the lowest description. Seriously and with tenderness I again remonstrated with Felix, and warned him against this false and dangerous friend. I reminded him of his pledge to Selma, and what depended on it; he did not say a word in answer, but looked very unhappy, and withdrew at the first opportunity; I fear, I fear it will never be well with him. His better-ordered life for some time after his interview with Selma seems not to have lasted long; and he appears to be so weak that the "Don't let yourself be tutored Felix! Be a man!" of the Rutchenfelts, or their sneer that he is "already under petticoat government," is sufficient to seduce him into every folly. I have had a prompting to talk with St. Orme himself, and endeavour to call forth the good spirit within him, but—if the evil one should show his teeth to me! However, I will let this thought brew a little while still; premature words seldom find good soil.

20th February.

Things wear a hopeful and a cheering aspect with respect to our two children, the one of seven the other of sixty years. The old man has undergone an operation which proved eminently successful. Lennartson was here to-day, and related to us in his sprightly manner the detail of the matter. The joy of the old man at beholding the sun again, and his boy, at being able to work, and lay aside the beggar's staff, touched us all. We deliberated on the future prospects of our children, and unanimously adopted Lennartson's plan.

Selma has contrived to involve Flora in this affair, so that she is now a party to it, and seems warmly to interest herself for it—that is to say, in Lennartson's presence.

23rd February.

The Baron has received new marks of honour in titles and orders. On his coming to us this evening, adorned with the badges of the latter, Flora testified great joy, while Selma and I congratulated him quite plainly. Lennartson took Flora's extravagant attestations of delight coldly, and was altogether not in good spirits. My stepmother observed this, and said playfully :

"It looks as if Lennartson were at variance with fortune just when she adorns him most elegantly."

"Fortune?" said Lennartson, with a melancholy smile.

"Yes," rejoined my stepmother, "at least most men would deem it such."

"Ah," replied Lennartson, seating himself with a kind of filial confidence beside her, "it is precisely this which vexes me,—namely, that people frequently regard such things as fortune, and attach worth to them, without inquiring whether they are an evidence of merit and real and actual significancy : I am annoyed that this is the fact, and that I am childish enough not to be exempt from such weakness ; it positively torments me : but the habit of superficiality in life is contagious, wherefore I long to escape it."

"But not, for all the world, by taking farewell of service?" my stepmother asked with alarm.

"No," said Lennartson in answer, "that is quite another thing. I will try to escape it by penetrating deeply and more deeply into life : I well know *where* I could become indifferent to all merely outward splendour, and feel warm at heart and rich in the reward which no human eye sees, in a glance, an unspoken mark of approbation."

"And where is that Dorado?" asked my stepmother tenderly, and with a sort of anticipation of his meaning.

In a voice which deep feeling made low-toned, and at the same time full, Lennartson said :

"I possessed it once in the heart of my mother, and might re-possess it in the affections of my partner, *if*," he pursued with emphasis, "if she should understand, and be what my soul desires and my heart seeks. Many congratulate me on my happiness and the way I have made in the world, and I——believe I have not yet been happy, or really *lived* since——the period of my earliest youth," he added, in a melancholy strain.

All this was spoken half-audibly to my stepmother, who was obviously affected, and said some kind words about the future, but not in a cheerful tone.

I looked at the young ladies. Flora blushed deeply ; and that Selma turned pale I could only guess, for, on my regarding her, she rose and quitted the room.

Thus then I have become personally acquainted with one of those faults of Lennartson's, which Brenner spoke about. But the manner in which it was disclosed has only invested it with interest in my eyes.

1st March.

Brenner will not understand me or obey my hints. He appears willing to allow his heart free range in making an assault on mine. Very good, so that it is not wounded in the fray! In forfeiting a lover, I will not at the same time lose a friend too, and one, moreover, noble and dear to me as is William Brenner. I was never happy in love. Where I loved, the affection was not reciprocated, and where I was beloved I could not return the attachment. But to friendship, pure, hearty friendship, I owe many of my chief joys on earth. A rejected lover may easily become the most trusty friend ; and that such is not so in effect is often the fault of the woman beloved. In the present instance no such censure shall attach to me, in so far as I am acquainted with my own self. I know nothing more melancholy than an acquaintance which began in cordiality suddenly resolving itself into acrimony, or ardent feelings changing to coldness. Every germ of affection which the All-bounteous One has disseminated on earth, it is appointed should ripen into a plant and bloom,—spring up here on His footstool, that it may one day blossom more gloriously beside His throne. When it turns out differently, when the flower is nipped in the bud, it is due to man's own erroneous conduct and is a very grievous case. I write this amid the odour of the syringa which I have received from my friend, and with my heart beating warm for him. It is tranquil and bright within me.

Thou source of solace to the heart when torn,
Of light and peace when life has dearth,—
Revered thou wert when dawned creation's morn,
Art still our gem of highest worth ;—

Thou wast, when earth's foundations first were laid,
And didst rejoice the Founder's sight ; *
Thou wast, when Heaven's creative fiat bade
His creatures spring from depth and height ;—

O Wisdom, morning, evening star of life,
On me in darkness thou didst shine,
And make all well ; and now, my heart from strife
Reclaimed, its every pulse is thine.

2nd March.

The incorrigible, luckless, misfortune-bringing, venomous and envenoming ladies of the Board of Trade! I would they sat petrified upon some bewitched mountain, and were not able ever again to move hand or foot. I would they had been already seated there yesterday. Then I had not to-day been necessitated to go about cumbered with the heaviest burden this life knows, and return without alleviation ; then I had not been necessitated to sit here, as now, writing in a mood resembling desperation, while tears fall upon my paper thick as the words which I throw together almost without seeing them.

But those birds of evil omen came and swooped down beside my stepmother. I was down-stairs with her, and while sitting at my painting I amused myself with observing the commotions which were produced by those three ladies both among our most intimate and distant acquaintances. They had already run through a long list of—"It is said," "It is thought," "It is asserted," when Mrs. P—— exclaimed with zeal : "But now a piece of news which is sure and certain. Our honourable Commodore Brenner is reported to have got a refusal from the rich widow lady, Z——! I know from her sister-in-law, who told me the whole story. She herself, it should seem, had no disinclination to the match in so far as he is per-

* Proverbs viii. 30.

sonally concerned, but the five stepchildren are said to have deterred her."

"Yes, poor man," said Miss Z——. "It will not be an easy thing for him with that number of children to get a wife, at least, one with money."

"Needs Captain Brenner, then, to make money so great a consideration in the choice of a wife?" inquired I, by no means in an enviable temper.

"Such, to a man who has five children to provide for and no property beyond his salary, must ever be a matter of consideration," answered Mrs. P——. "Brenner's first wife had nothing, and he is said to be no economist."

"Is Mrs. Z—— a lady of probity?" I further asked, and Miss P—— answered:

"Ah, there can be no doubt of the lady's goodness, I think; it must be admitted that she is not burdened with too much wit or feeling; but with a beautiful complexion, a fine figure, and a large freehold estate such as that of Guldäsa, which she possesses, one needs neither head nor heart in order to throw people into ecstacies. A little vain, a little infected with the matrimonial mania she certainly is———what a luckless passion is that of desiring to marry. I say with Madame De Sévigné: 'I would prefer drowning.'"

"So would I," I answered. "But do they know for a *certainty* that Commodore Brenner last week made overtures to Mrs. Z—?"

"Certain they are of it, my sweetest friend. Her own sister-in-law told me so. Besides they have documents respecting the affair, for it was negotiated by means of letters, which are said to have been very affecting, for Mrs. Z— wept day and night over them——they were obliged to get up a pocket-handkerchief-wash wholly and solely on this account.—But she formed her resolution, notwithstanding, and is said now to solace herself with the thought of a certain gentleman without children. And *à propos!* It is whispered abroad that Commodore Brenner consoles himself too, and seeks the object of comfort *here* in this house; it is even asserted that Miss Sophia Adelan knows something of this business."

Blushing like a guilty one and proud as innocence, I rebutted the charge and declared myself entirely ignorant of the affair. And seeing that the sisters were still bent on pursuing their irksome pleasantry, my stepmother said with a pleasing dignity which I liked vastly:

"If Captain Brenner has so recently made proposals to Mrs. Z— it would little accord with that respect he entertains for Sophy and his own personal character, should he so speedily solicit her hand. Besides which, I think such a match would be little suitable for Sophy. So many stepchildren is no jest. If my Sophy wishes to marry she will not fail to have an opportunity of choosing—hm, hm, hm."——

"Oh, of course!—That is unquestionable—when people possess so manyattractions and such talents, and a fortune to boot, nothing whatever is wanting; and a certain Baron and Court Chamberlain are already spoken of and——may we congratulate?"

I was scarcely in a condition to make a sign of negation, and rejoiced when the servant entered and announced that the carriage was before the door; the commereial ladies then took leave, and my stepmother drove out with Flora and Selma to make some visits.

"Let no one come in! say that nobody is at home," I said to the Philosopher (a trusty old servant of the family's, whose office it is all day long to keep a half-sleeping vigil in the saloon.)

I threw myself into an arm-chair before the pianoforte in the ante-chamber. A solitary light with a long wick burned in the chandelier. It was dark in the room and no less so in my spirit.

"It is the fortune then! It is speculation," thought I. I was so pained at heart that I could have wept. The image of the Viking was obscured to my inward sense. Previously I had beheld it so pure, noble and free from all every-day common-place; and now!—But no!—I would not surrender myself to the thoughts which the news I had just heard excited in me. "Peace! Be still!" I said to the spirits that tormented me. Let me maintain my faith in him. Let me preserve my friend! And why, moreover, should I fancy he desires to wed me?—Such is not his wish; he seeks in me merely a confidante, a lady friend, a sister!"

And then I passed all the five children in review, to explain to myself his wooing Mrs. Z—.

Beethoven's "Sonate Pathétique" lay on the music-desk and I commenced playing it. Its wild agitato took up the tumult of my feelings and becalmed it; my spirit rose upon the stream of harmony and broke through all obstructions to its course till it reached the grave and sweet conclusion, which frees and reconciles all—those glorious chords at the close of the last movement. I was so much absorbed in my music that I was not in the slightest degree aware of any altercation which was going on meanwhile in the saloon, and concluded by the philosopher's opening the door and exclaiming in a voice resembling that of the ghost in Hamlet:

"Miss, Commodore Brenner is in the saloon and insists upon coming in. Shall I beseech him to go away?"

"Did I not tell you that nobody was to have admission?" I inquired.

"Yes, he did say so," was here uttered by a well-known voice; "but I said to him: I have already gained admission."

And at a bound Brenner stood before me, so good-natured, so glad, and cordial, that I almost forgot all the impressions with which I had just been wrestling, and felt my heart move towards him.

He reached me a beautiful bouquet, continuing: "Only do *you* not say that I am to go my way."

In a melancholy but friendly manner, I replied:

"Ah, no, stay here, my mother will return home shortly."

"Ah, that does not concern me so much!" said Brenner. "I would first speak to you alone."

My heart was in a flutter from secret anxiety. He gazed at me, and my look probably betrayed my state of mind, for he became suddenly disquieted, and asked me with tenderness and sympathy, whether, "I was unwell?"

"No, I am well in health."

"Whether I was vexed?"

"Yes, I had learned something which troubled me."

Whether he had "any share in it?" And might "endeavour to solace me?"

I was silent.

"Shall I tell him everything?" thought I. "But no; that would indeed be folly. He would think I am in love with him."

He repeated his question with increased tenderness.

"No," I replied, "not at present—at some future time perhaps."

Whether I was "angry with him?"

"Yes, no,—he ought to ask no more questions."

"No more questions!" exclaimed Brenner. He was silent for awhile, and then pursued in a low-toned voice but which betokened excitement: "And yet I come to put to you a serious and very important question, one which has often forced itself to my lips and which I can no longer refrain from pronouncing; a question on which the weal or woe of my life depends—I come to ask: Sophy, will you, can you love me? I have for a long time loved you so ineffably! Will you be my companion through life, in joy and suffering?"

The voice, the expression, even the pressure of the hand which held mine.——O what eloquence of the heart! And all this he last week devoted to Mrs. Z—. And she, the lady without understanding or heart, with the "beautiful complexion and the estate of Guldäsa," rose like a spectre between me and Brenner and troubled me with unspeakable anguish. O had he only been the same to me as he was some hours previously, how frankly and heartily I could have spoken to him; I could have refused his hand without wounding his heart; I could have estranged the lover and yet preserved the friend for ever. But in the darkness which now pervaded my spirit, I neither knew him nor myself; the whole world was changed to me. A paralysing chill and gloomy stupor took possession of my entire being; I felt myself transformed into a marble statue, and in this state I allowed Brenner to talk without understanding him; heard him speak of his children, "the possession of whom was a joy and an honour;" heard him say how he and they would make me happy through gratitude and affection, and saw him bend his knee before me conjuring me to listen to and answer him.

But I could not pronounce an answer or move hand or tongue; my glance had not its language, and remained fixed immovably on him; yet I fancied tears gradually filled my eyes. He then rallied me on "letting him abide so long prostrate," and with a hasty turn he *seated* himself at my feet, heartily embraced my knee and protested that he would not rise till I had given him my Yes.

This manœuvre was well nigh overcoming me. I was on the eve of bending down to the beloved head and opening my entire heart to its possessor; but at the same moment I heard a noise in the saloon, and the voices of several persons entering.

At the same instant, too, I awoke to full consciousness and became alive to the bitterness of my situation.

"Rise! For heaven's sake, arise!" I said to Brenner. "They are coming."

"Let the whole world come!" he answered with affectionate defiance. "I will not rise without an answer from you."

A Satanic thought rose in my mind, and whispered: "His object is to take you by surprise and compel you—to be seen at your feet here in order that he may make it impossible for you to refuse him your hand."

With pride and indignation in voice and look I sprang from my seat and said:

"Commodore Brenner, I have done wrong to leave you so long in uncertainty. Pardon me for this and now listen to my definitive answer. I am resolved to keep my hand and fortune independent. I respect no man highly enough to concede him the right of sovereignty over both.

Brenner, on his part, had not been tardy in rising; on my delivering this harsh reply he rivetted a look of unspeakable astonishment on me. It seemed as if he was perfectly at a loss to comprehend me.

Cheerful voices and the footsteps of several persons were approaching through the saloon towards the door of our apartment; I advanced slowly to the door which leads to Selma's chamber. There, with my hand on the lock, I turned round and regarded Brenner. He stood there motionless, with his eyes rivetted on me; their expression I cannot describe, still less could I then comprehend it; but therein I read a farewell for ever. I fled up into my room, my spirit beset by indescribable and conflicting feelings. What I felt most acutely and painfully at the time was, the circumstance of Brenner and myself being separated for ever. I again realised to my own mind Mrs. Z—. in the entire peril of her person and Brenner's relation to her in order to explain and palliate my behaviour—but then came the remembrance of his last look; that strange look made my flesh quiver—and all criminality vanished from him—I alone was the amenable and guilty party.

During this conflict I was interrupted by Selma who besought me to come down-stairs and join them. I first thought of excusing myself, but on learning that Lennartson was present, an anticipation, a thought rose in my mind and I followed Selma.

I was feverish from mental disquietude. I soon observed that Lennartson's eye was fixed upon me, soon, too, he was seated beside me in a "causeuse" and in a low tone said:

"Upon my entering the saloon this evening, I found Brenner here alone and in a singular mood. He was neither able nor willing to give me any enlightenment on the subject. Have you seen him this evening?"

"Pray tell me," said I answering his inquiry with a question, "if it is true—as I had recently heard—that within these few days past a union between Brenner and Mrs. Z— has been in question? You are his friend and must know about it."

"I cannot deny that there has," replied the Baron, smiling.

"It is true then that such wedding has been in question?"

"Yes, it *was* certainly in question."

"He has then in effect made overtures to her?"

"Hem! That again is a different question," said Lennartson, smiling again.

"What? Did you not tell me that there had been question of a marriage between them?"

"Does it necessarily follow from that that *he* solicited her hand?"

"Not?—I thought so. Jest not, I pray you, on this subject, but speak out unreservedly how the matter stands. It is infinitely important to me, more important than I can express."

"Very good. What I know of the affair, to be brief, is this, that Mrs. Z— wished to have Brenner for her partner, but that he did not desire the lady for his. A third party conveyed both offer and refusal."

"Oh, heaven! Is it possible?—And—pardon me—from whom do you know that? Brenner himself?"

"No, certainly not. But from the third party just mentioned, who, for a double reason, ought to be exempted from the office of mediator. I rejoice, Miss Sophia, at being able to enlighten you upon a matter respecting which you have been so ill advised. And now—excellent Madam, permit me, as Brenner's and your friend, to put a question to you: What was his strange mood this evening due to?"

"*My fault!* My unpardonable fault."—I could say no more, I was crushed.

Lennartson was silent and gazed at me with his serious discreet-looking eyes. After a brief silence he said gently, almost soothingly:

"I shall probably meet him still before nightfall. Am I permitted to convey him any message, or greeting from you?"

"Ah, what would that avail?—He cannot, he dare not pardon me. We are for ever separated through my fault, my unworthy distrust. But, if you like, acquaint him with our present conversation."

And with this our dialogue was brought to a close. But then began the twinges of conscience in me.

O, what talisman is there against the bitter, crushing consciousness of having done wrong to a noble-spirited friend, cruelly wounded his heart, destroyed the most precious of his feelings—his faith in the object of his affection—and ruined his happiness! And for such transgression can no consolation be found?—O, William Brenner, now I understand that glance which spoke condemnation and divine sorrow for me. But if thou knewest that this night I have flooded my pillow with tears, and yet in the midst of my pain felt proud joy of thee, and thanked heaven that I possessed thy image so bright in my soul, wouldst thou—wouldst thou not, pardon me?

I spent the night without closing my eyes; with impatience I awaited the morning. I hoped that with it Lennartson would come. The morning came, grey and cold and damp; but no Lennartson, no little sun-gleam on the night of my heart. Hour after hour passed on, expectation became intolerable to me; read I could not, music was painful to me, and the kindest human words only increased my anxiety.

Suddenly the simple adage came into my mind: "What pains the heel pains not the heart." And at the same instant the "Bewitched-mountain" rose upon my imagination, and I fancied that to ascend it would be a peculiar recreation. I felt the necessity of essaying to quiet my mind by fatiguing my frame; and, putting an advertisement from the Daily Sheet into my reticule, I rambled southwards up the lofty mountain amid clouds and cold, and along the endless street which traverses it. Our temper of mind often imparts a hue to the objects which surround us; but on the day in question my mental condition was in deep sympathy with what I saw about me. The advertisement led me to a house in which mould and humidity covered the walls. No wonder, therefore, that pale Consumption was an inmate there. In the long street, consisting of a number of wretched buildings, I saw a crowd of ragged, pallid children, old dames and men—living pictures of poverty, sickness and age—and beheld misery in all stages of human life, and every variety of gloomy shade.

And among all those walking shadows there probably was not one that would have changed lots with me, had he been able to look into my heart. Ah, the hardest species of misery is not that which exhibits its rags in the streets by day and hides itself by night in huts. It is *that* which smiles in elegant society, and presents a cheerful exterior to the world while pain is gnawing at the heart.

Had I been a little more cheerful in spirits, I should have thought with pleasure on the covered stone jugs I saw in many hands, and the warm soup which charity prepares at a fire that is never extinguished and which, still fuming, the poor were conveying to their dwellings for dinner.

On my return home I hoped to obtain a word, or some sort of intelligence about Brenner; but no, nothing! Some hours, however, are passed over. Perhaps Lennartson will come in the evening.

Evening.

No! he has not been here. I have obtained information about Brenner by artifice. *He did not return home last night.*

3rd March.

Another sleepless night. Morning come again—whither shall I go to-day?

"When woman is no longer her own friend, she goes to her brother who is still such, that he may gently commune with her and restore life to her"——

These words of Jean Paul inspired me with a desire to repair to my sister Selma; but the confessions I had to make put me to confusion. While thinking thus, she came to me with her beautiful eyes glancing such tender inquiries—such concern. I could not forbear letting her look into my heart. And how heartily did she solace me, how warmly did she defend me against my self-accusation, and how clearly did she foresee the hour of reconciliation! Ah, I venture not to hope for such consummation. Did I but know how it is now with him, what his sentiments are towards me!

In the evening.

Such knowledge I now possess. Lennartson came here in the afternoon, but he was not in a cheerful mood.

And yet it is well that he did come. It had been a difficult thing for me to endure my suspense another night. To my look of inquiry he immediately answered:

"I have just seen Brenner. I have acquainted him with our conversation of the evening before yesterday."

"Very good, and he?" I asked, almost breathless.

"He said he himself anticipated a misunderstanding of some kind had been the cause of—— what it was he did not mention."

"And he said—nothing besides?"

"He added: 'If any one had told me aught ill of her, I would not have believed it.'"

"And that was all? Did he say nothing more of this affair?"

"No," rejoined Lennartson, visibly affected. "But it was obvious that he had suffered and was still suffering in heart. What unhappy misunderstanding has brought you thus into disharmony, and thus separated two beings, who, I thought—but you are not yet separated! It is impossible. I know Brenner's heart. Entrust me with a word, a cordial word to him and—let me lead him to your feet."

"Impossible. Pray, do no more in this business. You yourself would not desire it if you knew all. Tell me only—do you think Brenner entertains any animosity against me?"

"Animosity is a feeling which has no place in Brenner's bosom, least of all against you. What he said about you was spoken with seriousness and tenderness."

"I can hope, then, that he has no aversion from me. That is a great deal. I thank you heartily for your kindness."

"Thank me by commissioning me with the deliverance of a conciliatory greeting to my friend. To me he looked as if he had not slept and would not have repose for some nights."

"Tell him, if you will, that I myself have been equally restless since—and now let us talk no farther on this subject. It is one of those which must now depend entirely on the guidance of heaven."

Lennartson bowed with great earnestness and, seeing me weep, he took my hand and with the voice of an angel, spoke gentle words to me. O, how kind-hearted he is! It is advancing towards twelve o'clock at night.

I am now calmer. I have obtained certainty. That friendship, then, which gave me such joy, is past—which was to extend to eternity, is no more, and through my own fault.

I discovered a costly pearl in the stream of life and—cast it heedlessly away from me. I did not deserve it.

"If any one had told me aught ill of her I would not have believed it." What overwhelming reproof for me do these affectionate words imply!

But I merit all this and therefore I will bear it without complaining. Sleep this night I cannot, nor perhaps for several nights. But that is a matter of indifference. If I only knew that *he* will find rest.

The weather is boisterous without. Clouds, urged by the North-wind, speed on above the Palace. The lamps on the bridge and the quay are flickering, their reflection quivers on the troublous waters, and one after the other is extinguished by the storm. Poor, vacillating lamps, good night.

7th March.

Brenner has gone on an expedition to several of the sea-port towns of Sweden to treat of matters concerning the fleet. He will remain some weeks absent. That is well.

It is cold to-day—a clear, cold air. The snow lodges upon the ice in the Knight's bay and lies dazzling and still on the southern mountains—still and cold as indifference. I would it were so with my heart. But no! I would not have it so. *He suffers* still. I plumed myself too much upon my philosophy and strength and prudence, and have been punished for it. Burn, therefore, holy wound, purifying fire, consume my selfishness and vanity to their roots. Burn and burn them out.

In the evening.

I shall overcome my sufferings, that I feel; I shall master them, for I have had a clear presentiment that he has pardoned me, that his sentiments and thoughts about me are gracious. And for the first time I feel the need of the compassion and sympathy of a fellow-mortal. Such presentiments of the disposition of those who are dear to me I have frequently had, for good as for bad; and they have never yet deceived me.

The feeling which unites me and Brenner is in truth not of an ordinary kind, and still less can it be annihilated by the precipitancy of the moment. It is grounded deeply in the nature of our beings. And I know, William Brenner, that we shall once more meet and be united in intimacy and harmony, though it be not before this life's scene is past; I know it and have never felt it more distinctly than at this time, in which we are apparently separated farther than ever. I have written some words to Brenner, resembling those I penned down here. They will reach him on his return from Stockholm.

This evening the stars shine clear; not a cloud dims their brightness. Good night, William; to-night thou wilt sleep; to-night I also shall find rest; and to-morrow I shall be fully alive to the interest of those who are about me. Thou hast exhibited to me a pattern of activity which I will follow.

10th March.

And the drama which is enacted in my immediate vicinity really demands my whole attention. I am still in quest of the thread which shall lead me out of the maze and set free the captives; that St. Orme is the Minotaur I distinctly perceive, and it looks as if Flora's prognostication respecting herself—that she should take his evil nature—would in reality be fulfilled. But why should Selma be sacrificed to her? Why should the Sylphide lose her wings in this struggle? She has for sometime past been actually a martyr to Flora's ever increasing unhappy temper, whose possessor seems to experience a sort of delight in tormenting her with harsh treatment and absurd suspicion. Selma bears this with unexampled meekness but—her cheerful song is heard no more, and her light floating gait becomes less and less elastic.

Yesterday I voided to her the cup of my indignation against Flora.

"Pardon her!" Selma begged, with her fine eyes suffused with tears, "she herself is so little happy."

And such is the truth; my stepmother, who does not understand Flora's condition, and wishes to see every one about her cheerful, seeks to enliven

her by all kinds of diversions and pleasures; but at present these appear to have lost all power over her, while her evil genius continues to gain stronger hold of her spirit.

The evening before last, after a few visitors had withdrawn, leaving us ladies of the family alone with St. Orme, Flora stood a long time absorbed in contemplation of the portrait of Beatrice Cenci.

"Do you propose taking a copy of that lady, since you survey it so closely?" asked St. Orme, in his displeasing tone of sarcasm.

"Perhaps," replied Flora, in a voice which sounded almost dismal. She then pursued in an altered tone: "I am endeavouring to realise to myself what her state of mind was."

"Before or subsequent to the murder of her father?" inquired St. Orme, in the same strain as previously.

"Subsequent!" answered Flora, "*Before* of course, undoubtedly."

"Bless me, my sweet Flora!" said my step-mother, "can you occupy yourself with such thoughts?"

"Ay, I can indeed," rejoined Flora, "she had made trial of everything, everything, St. Orme, to rescue herself from the circumstances in which she was placed; her tormentor did not release her: she was goaded to extremities, to distraction—— in short, I comprehend her deed. But after it, after——"

"Well," said St. Orme, taking up the sentence, "after it was accomplished she could think about preparing for death, the scaffold and the executioner."

"It is reported," continued Flora, "that at the hour when she was going to her death, when she was to ascend the scaffold, she burst forth into a strain of cheerful thanksgiving, so full of what is loftiest and best in the human heart that those who were to comfort her became mute, and changed their compassion into admiration. It is said that her beauty was never more affecting or her glance more beaming, than in the hour when, a contrite but redeemed sinner, she advanced to meet death, free and triumphant! at this I in no-wise wonder; but I should like to know, oh, I should like to know what the feeling of freedom and happiness is! I should like to know what the feeling is, I should like to know what the feeling is, I should like to know what—"

She repeated these words several times, as if frantic, and then suddenly sank upon the ground in a swoon.

Our confusion was great; Flora was conveyed into Selma's room, and here our care soon restored her to life but only to see her fall into an hysterical state, from which she passed into quiet slumber, but not before several hours had elapsed.

On her waking again it was night. She lay still with her eyes fixed on the portrait of Virginia that hung at the foot of Selma's bed, (on which the latter lay) and said in a half-audible tone as if to herself:

"She, too, was fair and unhappy, she, too, died in the bloom of her youth, died of a broken heart, but she, like many a woman, died pressed down by quiet suffering, died without splendour or revenge. Beatrice was the happier of the two."

"That is known to the Eternal Judge alone," said I in a low tone.

"Yes, what do we know?" pursued Flora, "I know nothing save that I am more unhappy than either of those two. It is strange, but for some time past, the thought of a bloody deed, of a murder, for instance, has had something refreshing in it to me. A great change must be wrought in the mind of one who does any deed of horror—such a one as admits no retreating, no uncertainty, no hope, no fear. Then indeed the spirit that has put his tricks upon us may abandon his victims, and we comprehend what we are. And when the hour of death draws nigh, and everything on earth is past, then indeed the heart may grow cool and tranquil; then may arise feelings of resignation and contrition, and then, too, perhaps, an angel from heaven may come and kindle light in the soul before actual death; but then we die! die! are laid in the gloomy earth, moulder away to dust, and are trodden on by the feet of men—— Oh, no, no! I will not die: no! why is it so dark here! why do you suffer me to lie here as in a sepulchre? let me have more light: and Selma—where is she? she used to love me; but she doubtless has forsaken me, like all the rest."

"Never, never!" answered a voice full of affection, from the depth of the alcove, and on the other side of Flora's pillow, Selma's beautiful form, arrayed in white, raised itself slowly up. She took Flora's hands in her own, and entreated with tears:

"O, Flora, Flora, if you do still love me, grant what I supplicate of you. You resemble yourself less with every day; some weighty secret presses upon your heart which makes you unhappy.

"O, speak, Flora! tell us what it is, tell us everything: you know how we love you. How could it be possible that we should fail to discover a means of comforting and calming you? ah, put your confidence in us, you will feel yourself free as soon as you open your heart, as soon as you are no longer a mystery to those who hold you dear."

"No longer a mystery!" exclaimed Flora, "and if by opening my heart I only appear more obscure to you than formerly, Selma, how would you bear that?"

"Ah, I can bear anything save seeing you altered and unhappy as you are."

"You think so," said Flora, "but you deceive yourself: you belong to that class of good and meek spirits who abhor all that is unusual and eccentric because they deem it iniquitous—because they do not comprehend it; they cannot look reality in the face without trembling; they cannot love without illusions, they have not strength to ——but pardon me; I will not be harsh; I myself need assistance and forbearance. Help me you cannot, Selma, no one can—but you may alleviate the struggle. And now, will you read me something, something to quiet me—what have you there? a book of psalms? read some of them to me, if you will, it is a long time since I have looked into a work of that character."

On leaving the two young friends, I heard Selma read in a voice to which she strove ineffectually to give steadiness:

"Now hushed is all the earth."

The day following I found Flora better, but Selma's appearance wore traces of a deeply de-

pressed spirit. I proposed to her that we should go to the Museum after breakfast, to look at some recently-arrived statues. She gladly assented, and Flora's declining the invitation to accompany us, was not displeasing to me.

We had not been long amid these noble works of art before I saw Ehrensvärd's youthful pupil become cheerful and, in contemplating the beautiful and sublime, her spirit relieved itself of the burden which oppressed it.

I perceived with joy how the possession of a heart susceptible to the beauties of Art or Nature can free us from the pangs arising from the pressure of circumstances, and sensibility of character. Yet this will not avail in all instances, and still less should it. There are sufferings which are higher than any kind of enjoyment; I mean nobler: these ought not to be eradicated, but they may be relieved and assuaged; the chrysalis of suffering even may assume wings, fly in the night, and be lighted by its stars, and bathe in the dew of its flowers.

A spirited, hallowed melancholy continued to supplant the painful, oppressed expression of Selma's countenance, the more my observations induced her to think and pronounce her opinion.

At the statue of Niobe, I said I thought Niobe herself showed too little pathos; I wished to see more of despair, more anger in her countenance.

"She struggles with higher powers," answered Selma. "To her neither revenge nor hope are possible. Besides which, it is the first time she has become acquainted with misfortune; and it comes upon her so suddenly and is so great that she is overwhelmed; she does not reach the point of deep suffering, she is stupified. Look. Regard her from this side, mark that trait of pain quivering about her mouth. You see that only one more moment of time is required, only another bolt to be hurled, and her capacity of suffering is extinguished—she is converted into stone."

I looked at Selma. At that moment there was an extraordinary resemblance between Niobe's expression and her own. I fancied that she too would be pained and petrified in like manner. But heaven preserve my young sister!

Pausing at an antique head of Zeno I remarked:

"Do you not perceive in this countenance some advance towards Christianity?"

"Yes," she replied, "there is self-denial without elevation."

"She will not petrify," thought I again, glancing at her spirited face. "She will extricate herself and conquer. The sylphide will not lose her wings for long."

"At that moment we heard the following whispered quite close to us:

"Lieutenant Thurè will not go to the ball this evening. It is too vexatious."

"Nor De Burè, the royal secretary, either. He said, notwithstanding that, he would come on my account. But gentlemen are never to be relied upon. He did as much as engage me for the first waltz. The next time he comes and puts on his courtesy I will be quite ungracious towards him."

"Yes, it really looked as if you had made a conquest——."

"And doesn't that marble bust there appear to you like that of De Burè? Do you know what piece of civility he said to me yesterday evening?"

The mark of courtesy on the part of the gentleman in question was pronounced in so low a tone that I did not hear it. We had already recognised Hilda and Thilda Angel who stood before the bust of Septimius Severus complaining of their cavaliers. They then perceived us and we reciprocated salutations. As it began to be cold in the gallery of sculpture, I proposed a walk across the Ships-holm to the Zoological Gardens and asked the Angels if they would accompany us. They "would certainly be most glad to do so—but—four ladies without a gentleman—how would that be?"

Selma and I protested with a laugh that it would be excellent, especially if we went two and two; and we did commence our promenade each with an Angel at her side, but felt great tedium.

In the Zoological Gardens we met Madame Rittersvärd and her daughter. They were heartily kind and so cheerful that it infected us. Madame Rittersvärd was so much improved in point of health, and Hellfrid felt quite happy at being once more in the bracing air of the bosquet after such long confinement. It was splendid. The snow melted in the noon-day sun, the young firs were fragrant, moss and fern grew green and fresh on the earth and round the stems of the trees. Hellfrid had had long acquaintance with all such matters, and, in answer to questions from Selma and myself, communicated several things on their economy and properties, and excited in us a great desire to cultivate a better acquaintance with those children of nature. We moreover congratulated Hellfrid on her attainments and this new source of enjoyment.

But the Angels grew more and more ill at ease, and I perceived in them that lamentable mental indigence which is pretty frequently the consequence of our education, and which makes its possessor, amid the treasures of nature and art, void of taste and thought except on the subject of—suitors at balls. In addition to this, our party then consisted of six ladies and not a gentleman! Fate was cruel to the poor children. Their looks, however, took animation when two young gentlemen approached arm in arm, and I heard them whisper the names of Thurè and Burè. But Thurè and Burè saluted, and—passed on. The Angels looked in despair.

Again a gentleman approached us, and he did not pass on; but after an ejaculation of joyful surprise, and friendly greetings he accompanied us back to the city. It was Lieutenant Sparrsköld. But he walked beside Hellfrid Rittersvärd. Hilda and Thilda walked together.

At a sign from her mother Hellfrid invited the two Angels with the rest of the company to walk home with her and drink a glass of chocolate in the shade of her hyacinths. The Angels declined the invitation with countenances strongly expressive of ill temper, but Selma, young Sparrsköld and myself accepted it with pleasure.

In the shade of Hellfrid's fragrant hyacinths we soon were drinking a cup of excellent chocolate and maintained a sprightly and interesting conversation upon the proper manner of making available and employing life and time.

No one present was more delighted to listen than the good old lady, who still finds her life so affluent and full of interest, that she is called at six o' clock every morning, for fear of losing hours which to her are passing more and more rapidly away.

Young Sparrsköld asserted in a playful manner, that it would be much more beneficial to sleep longer, and kissed her hand as he spoke, with filial, nay almost child-like tenderness.

Hellfrid regarded both with tearful eyes.

An awful catastrophe converted this scene of affection and ease into terror. A hollow pistol-report was suddenly heard, proceeding apparently from the apartment below that in which we sate. Sparrsköld sprang up.

"That was in Captain Rumler's room!" he exclaimed and rushed out of the chamber, as if seized with a dark foreboding.

At the expiration of a quarter of an hour he returned, very pale. Captain Rumler had shot himself. Everything was already at an end with him. For some time past the derangement of his pecuniary circumstances, and his liking for strong drinks, had been a topic of conversation; it appears he had long laboured at his ruin. Its consummation had now arrived.

Excited and alarmed we separated from each other.

"He was one of Felix's more intimate acquaintances," said Selma on our return. May it not be——"

She did not complete her sentence.

It was unpleasant intelligence with which we were about to surprise my stepmother.

13th March.

The news of Captain Rumler's unhappy end has quickly diffused itself through the city. The Commercial Ladies gave us a proof of that to-day. "It is said that he made an attack on the cash-box of the regiment, that he could no longer conceal this and would not survive his disgrace. Another young gentleman, the son of wealthy parents and implicated in the affair of Rumler, has fled."

"It is asserted" that several occurrences of a similar cast will follow this.

Good has this once arisen from misfortune. Äke Sparrsköld is next in rank to Rumler and will get the command of his company. Nothing farther now obstructs the union between him and Hellfrid, the happiness of the entire family.

14th March.

"The Rutschenfelts also have now decamped. Heaven preserve Felix!"

With these words my stepmother joined us to-day, and was so dejected at the news, so troubled about the consequences as to forget all thoughts of 'striking' me and her Metternich-like airs to boot.

Among the run-aways on account of debt the Messrs. Bravander are also enumerated—those gentlemen who, at the New-year's Assembly, talked with such zeal about the devil fetching them.

15th March.

"Has Felix been here? Do you know anything of him?" Lennartson to-day inquired almost at the same instant he entered the room; and on our replying in the negative, it appeared displeasing to him, though he endeavoured to conceal it. St. Orme, the Court Chamberlain and some other gentlemen together with the Baron were here this afternoon. The conversation soon turned upon the Rutschenfelts legion, part of which had already taken flight, and the other part were said to be ready for flying. They named a number of people whom they had cheated, bereft of their little fortunes, families they had plunged into the deepest distress, mothers, brides, whose hopes were crushed and future prospects darkened for ever. The aged father of one of those who had decamped was afflicted with paralysis from fright—but it would be too long to detail all the cases of misfortune that are at present currently spoken of.

Lennartson was silent during this time, but I relieved my heart by uttering some words of strong indignation.

St. Orme, who constantly places himself in opposition to me, shrugged his shoulders at the "tragical manner" in which people construed things of such common occurrence and the ado they made about the youthful aberrations of some wild young persons. He for his part sincerely deplored them, but he condemned no one. We ought not to be too severe against youth. They must have time to expend their raging. Then they return to reflection and discretion."

"That is very finely spoken," remarked the Court Chamberlain in a smooth tone and with keen satire, "and I for my part think of always saying 'the blessed Rumler,' though I would not exactly depone an oath, that the blessed Rumler is blessed in point of fact. *I* believe however that we must pay our debts and live as orderly men in this world, and, moreover, that it must be rather a ticklish thing to make such an entrance into the next world as that of Rum—the blessed Rumler."

Lennartson then took up the matter and, with a quiet, firm glance fixed on St. Orme, he very seriously animadverted on the conduct which had just been described and the sentiments which would regard it as innocent. He described its influence on society in general, portrayed a people in their decline—the laxity of principle as the pernicious source of their declension—luxury, predominant levity—the inviolate nature of promises observed by no one—order and integrity departing and with them confidence, security, and promptitude in doing good offices, all pure and generous feelings—all relations of life poisoned—and all its healthful and fresh delights vanished. Thus it was with the nations of antiquity when they were advancing towards their dissolution, a disgraceful, and lingering death,—a spectacle for our compassion and contempt; and thus it would be with us if we did not apprehend our own nature and life with seriousness.

"I could wish," Lennartson pursued, his eyes sparkling and his words passing in rapid succession from his lips, "I could wish that all honourable men, all the better portion of the community would brand with abhorrence and contempt those thoughtless characters, those young deceivers who sacrifice everything for the gratification of their wretched appetites. I know but one description of character more culpable and despicable than they

—and it is HE who, under the mask of prudence, poisons their principles and, under the semblance of friendship, lures them into misery, making them an instrument, and victims to his selfishness and base plans—the *serpent* of society, the calculating seducer."

Was it Lennartson's intention to hurl a thunderbolt at St. Orme in these words, or was it the latter's bad conscience which made him feel the stroke—certain it is that I saw him for the first time lose his satirical confidence, and look perplexed and struck. The blood fled from his cheeks; he endeavoured to say something, but his voice faltered; he made an attempt to smile but his lips quivered with a convulsive motion.

Flora regarded him with astonishment and a species of enjoyment! she seemed to delight in his dismay and pains. She smiled—hatefully. It was silent as death at table, and on my stepmother suddenly giving the sign to rise, we all promptly followed her example, though the dessert had not been touched.

St. Orme soon recovered himself. In a short time he was heard bantering and laughing with the Court Chamberlain, but his laugh was not natural. It was not long before he left the company, after casting a sly, embittered look at Lennartson.

When our guests had withdrawn we were all out of spirits in a high degree. I sought to captivate my stepmother's attention by a "question of the day," but in this I was not successful.

Better success crowned the efforts of the Commercial Ladies who came laden with news and as eager to communicate as we were to receive it. The subjects were mostly the Rutschenfelt party and the disorder and misery which the runaways had left behind them. The causes also to which the ruin of those young men was due, were discussed, and among these many instances of injudicious parents, bad examples and neglected supervision in youth were brought forward. But with this catalogue of sad stories. Mrs. and Miss P—helped us to get through the long evening. In the mean time two messengers were despatched in quest of Felix, but had not found him at home.

On separating for the night, Selma and I—as is frequently our wont—remained a while before the pictures in the inner room and viewed them in the mild glimmering of the lamp. Selma stood a long time regarding a picture in the style of Guido Reni, representing St. Michael, who, with anger flaming upon his divinely beautiful countenance, and his foot set upon the breast of Satan, is transfixing him with his lance.

"Why does my Selma gaze so long at this picture?" said I joining her, "there is something most thrilling in it."

"But something very beautiful also," she replied. "It is easy to understand what *holy wrath* is; look at St. Michael's countenance, tell me, does it not remind us of—resemble——"

Selma paused, and blushed in confusion.

"Lennartson as we saw him this evening," said I, completing the sentence, and Selma's glance told me that I had pronounced her thoughts.

At that moment we were disturbed by some one opening the door leading into the saloon. It was the person of a man enveloped in a broad cloak; the garment fell from him, and we recognised Felix Delphin; but how altered he was, his pale disfigured countenance wore scarce a trait of its former beauty.

"Selma!" said he, in a hoarse tremulous voice, "do not be afraid of me, I wish merely to say farewell to you before I—"

"Before what, Felix?"

"Before I leave you and Sweden for ever. O Selma, I desired to see you once more to entreat you to think of me, to pray for me, when I am far removed from you."

"Felix! why will you go away?"

"Because I am ruined, ruined through my weakness, my levity, property, health, honour, everything is lost; I cannot, I will not here experience my disgrace."

"But is there no remedy, cannot Lennartson—"

"No, he once before snatched me out of the hands of the usurer, and I then gave him my word of honour that I would not fall into the like again. This I have violated, I would rather die than encounter his look."

"But I and Flora, we are your nearest relations, and we possess some valuable things—"

"Hush, good angel, I am not yet sunk deep enough to take favours of——besides would it avail! O Selma! Everything between us must now come to an end. Here you have back your ring, I am not worthy of you; beg Lennartson to pardon me, greet Flora, may she be worthy of him: and you, good angel, heaven bless you. Farewell!"

He kissed the hem of her garment, and was going to rush out of the room, when he was prevented by a man, who stepped between him and the door, and laid fast hold of his arm, at the same time exclaiming sternly:

"Whither, Felix?"

It was Lennartson. Felix paused to take breath, but the next moment he made a violent effort to tear himself away and escape; the Baron, however, held him with a strong grasp, and said with seriousness:

"Be quiet, young man, no foolish pranks; will you afford a scene to the people outside? besides this profits you nothing. You *must* follow me."

"You wish to dishonour me," stammered Felix, pale with impotent rage.

"*You* wish to dishonour yourself, but I desire to deliver you, though against your will," said Lennartson.

"It is too late," exclaimed Felix.

"It is *not* too late," rejoined Lennartson, "I know all about you, and promise to deliver you, but in return I require *one* thing at your hands—which is, that at this moment you engage yourself to me entirely, take not a step without my knowledge and will, and obey me in all things. In the first place, I desire you quickly to go with me quietly in my carriage, which is now before the door."

Lennartson spoke all this in an under-tone, and as if he wished Felix alone to hear him; but the strong stress he laid upon his words made every one of them audible to us, though standing at some distance; Felix seemed crushed, his will was subdued to one of greater strength, but he could not bear himself up unassisted. Almost powerless, he leant against the wall.

"Support yourself on me," said Lennartson, suddenly become gentle and tender, drawing the young man into his arms; "What are you afraid

of?—am I not your friend, your paternal friend? —confide in me! come—be a man. Think of the eyes that are now looking upon you. Come."

At these words Felix did in effect nerve himself, and said in a low tone:

"Deal with me as you please, I will obey."

Lennartson, observing him stagger, took his arm, and waving his hand kindly, but in refusal to us as we were approaching to offer assistance, conducted the youth away with a glance at us which seemed to say:

"Be at ease."

Selma, agitated by excited feelings, threw herself into my arms. This night, which was passed by both of us without sleep, I did not leave her, and wrote these lines in her bed-chamber.

16th March.

Felix is sick, but—as they assure us—not dangerously. They have opened a vein in him, and Lennartson has spent the entire night in watching over him. Flora has but this instant returned from her brother, and I rejoice to see her really affected and troubled at his condition.

In the afternoon.

Lennartson has just been here—so kind, so consoling. Felix's affairs are far less deranged than he himself thought. A hasty run upon him by his creditors—who were alarmed by the flight of his friends,—their threats, his being entirely without money, and his ignorance of the true state of his concerns, had engendered his desperate resolution: Lennartson is perfectly assured of his being able to rescue him from his embarrassment, though many difficulties are to be surmounted.

On our expressing the regret we felt at the trouble and time which this wretched business would cost him, he said gently:

"May Felix only be induced to amendment by this serious warning, in which case I will not complain of what has happened either on his account or my own."

"How kind you are, how infinitely kind you are! ah, that Felix and we all could some day duly thank you."

Pronouncing these words Selma, with eyes beaming and suffused with tears, turned as if involuntarily to Lennartson. He seemed surprised, and his cheeks coloured as he said:

"Such words from Miss Selma! can I merit them! but I fain would, I should be glad in any way to contribute to make her happy."

Melancholy was mingled with the tenderness with which he spoke these words, as he took hold of Selma's hand, and looked penetratingly into her eyes; but her eyelids sank quickly, and she grew pale as she fell back apparently from his searching, feeling glance. At this moment Flora entered, and cast a look of ardent jealousy on both; Selma hastily drew back; Lennartson became silent and absent and soon withdrew.

Flora then turned to Selma, and said pointedly: "That was really a most touching scene I disturbed; may we ask what tender effusions took place in it?—Silence?—why, it looks as if you were all conspiring against me: Selma blushes like a culprit: you too, Selma, you also against me! now, indeed I do stand alone, forsaken——"

"Flora, Flora, utter no such words, unless you wish to kill me," exclaimed Selma, with an expression of acute pain, and hastened out of the room.

"Flora," said I, you are really not worthy of such a friend as Selma."

"Leave me to myself," she replied, "I do not care for the whole world."

I followed Selma, and found her in her chamber, upon her knees, with her countenance buried in her hands.

"Selma," I said in entreaty, "take not Flora's absurd expressions to heart. You yourself know, and we all know how innocent you are."

"No, no!" she exclaimed with animation. "I am no longer innocent. O Sophia, it is that which makes me unhappy. I am false to her. Ah, I feel it now. Innocent, yes, with respect to design and will, but with respect to feeling and secret thoughts—O Sophia, I am guilty."

"That you are not," I replied with confidence, and then made application of all my eloquence to reconcile the excited young maiden to herself. I made it clear to her that she by no means wished to sever the connection between Flora and Lennartson, nay, that she would even sacrifice her own happiness to promote it. To this she was obliged to assent and she raised her head again. I then told her that such affection as hers to a man of Lennartson's stamp was not a feeling of which we had to be ashamed. On the contrary, it was alike noble and ennobling. And finally I hit upon the lucky thought of representing myself a rival to Flora, but a secret one, because no noble feminine heart could remain indifferent to manly worth and manly amiability of such a character, and from this reason I gave myself unqualified permission to love Lennartson.

Selma could not forbear smiling at this, and, smiling through her tears, she threw her arms about my neck. I left her, in some measure reconciled to herself, to seek Flora. But the latter was in her room, and on entering it I saw her conceal in her bosom a little white phial which she was holding in her hand; her cheek was alternately white and red. Seeing how unhappy she was I spoke kindly to her, spoke of Selma's purity and tenderness and all our wishes to see Flora peaceful and happy. I heartily entreated her to meet our desires and have confidence in us.

Flora listened to me with her countenance abased; all at once she exclaimed with vehemence:

"Sophy! I am at times fearfully unhappy. I am afraid of myself. At times I feel myself in a condition to do anything to come to an end, an end. Yes, if it were only then at an *end*, an everlasting end! But I know, or more properly, I fear what may follow. Ah, that nothing can attain to cessation. I am so weary!—If you do entertain any benevolent sentiment towards me, leave me not much alone. I cannot otherwise answer for myself.—How frantic the sun shines upon the snow there, just as if there were aught else but confusion and darkness in the world. It is of no import! Will you go with me to the Unknown One? Perhaps, she has some tranquillising word for me."

I was willing and soon ready. We went. On approaching the house of the Unknown One, however, we observed a narrow way, traced by fresh pine-branches strewed upon the snow, which led to

her door. The latter was locked. The Unknown One had the day before been carried out to "the death-still, resting-place begirt with pines"—the church-yard at Solna.

"And this door locked," said Flora gloomily, as we entered upon our return home. But then the flood-gates of my eloquence opened; and from a hearty desire to comfort Flora and strongly impressed with what is great and divine in life I gave expression to a great many things — good, I think. But with this we ever flatter ourselves. I was not, however, entirely unsuccessful in my efforts, for Flora listened quietly to me and on our return home she pressed my hand with a friendly but melancholy: "Thanks, Sophy." Yet she remained uncommunicative as before. Ah! I preach wisdom to others and have acted like a foolish one myself; I seek to console, and have no peace in my own breast. Disquietude prevails in our house. My stepmother is cold in her deportment to me, I know not why.

William! thou with thy rich, warm heart, thou who wert ever frank, ever affectionate towards me, where art thou?—O the pain of having wounded thee, of having estranged thee from me. For thee —at thy feet does this burning tear of remorse fall. Thou wilt never shed such a one—good-will to thee!

23rd March.

Dull, heavy days,—days on which life moves tardily as a ship in a head-sea, on which nothing will go forward, not even self-improvenent, that ought never to be stationary. There seems a dense cloud floating above us. Flora is as usual torn by restless spirits and Selma is no longer what she was.

My stepmother is in an excited state of mind.

I plainly perceive that the confidential conversations which I sometimes hold with one and the other member of the family do not please her. She looks as if she suspected me of an intention to provoke an insurrection in the house.

Felix has meanwhile improved, but his irregular habits of life appear to have deranged his health. He recovers slowly. Lennartson endeavours to inspirit and rouse him to cheerfulness. He frequently passes his evenings in reading Walter Scott's novels to him. So true it is that—No one is equally good with the strong.

25th March.

A little joy. "The engagement between Äke Sparrsköld and Hellfrid Rittersvärd has been publicly declared."—My stepmother surprised me today with this piece of intelligence and was herself very agreeably excited by an event which is a source of great joy to her good old friend. Next week my stepmother proposes celebrating this betrothal by giving a soirée, that shall do great honour to the house. By this, too, she appears desirous to strike a blow at the various disquieting reports about the affairs of the family which begin —yet without foundation, I hope—to spread through the city. But as long as St. Orme is creeping about in our home and has secret interviews with my stepmother, I am not certain that my hope is well grounded. It is a bad sign, besides, that our "spasmodic acquaintances" have not shown themselves here for some time.

29th March.

The cloud continues to lower; and darkness thickens more and more around us. Yesterday my stepmother wished to have a new carpet on the floor of the large ante-chamber for the proposed festivity. The present one had for a long time looked very shabby and was, besides, spotted in several places, in short,—she was resolved on having a new and beautiful carpet. But Selma gently opposed her and at length said in a tone of entreaty: "Ah, let us not incur any great expences, till we know how our affairs stand."

From this circumstance I observe with some alarm that Selma (who directs the in-door economy of the house,) entertains a suspicion which she has hitherto concealed from me.

At the same moment the Philosopher entered and said in his unearthly tone of voice:

"Accounts, my Lady."

He immediately placed a packet of bills upon the table. My stepmother cast a troubled look at them, and pushing them from herself said to Selma:

"My dear child, look them through — I am not in a condition to do so at present. It thrills one to hear what a voice honest Jacob has sometimes. He really terrifies one—I protest that it sometimes makes me feel unwell."

Selma embraced her mamma in silence, took the accounts and went with them into her room. My stepmother became still and pensive. She reclined her head on the sofa-bolster, and on her handsome, pale countenance there was depicted a something which grieved me to the heart. It was late in the evening and the lamp burned dim. I fancied shadows of care and sorrow were flitting about her, and I thought I saw her face grow paler and more pale and old. Silent wishes, that the quiet of the grave were the lot of all, passed through my mind.

3rd April.

After breakfast this day, while alone with my stepmother, she resumed the question of the carpet. She could not bear the unsightly spots. Besides, on Wednesday an elegant musical soirée was to be given at our house. How could such a carpet be suffered to remain and what would people think of a family that could endure it? That very day a new one should be procured. I endeavoured to offer a little opposition, spoke of the price, how superfluous the expense would be, &c. All with the greatest good-will and meekness; but my stepmother took it in very bad part, and all at once broke out with much warmth:

"I must beg you, my excellent Sophia, to be without any solicitude about my own concerns,—and I wish also that in other cases you would not be too much the ruler in my house. Hitherto I have been entirely competent to the care and direction of myself and mine, and think I am still not incapable of the same. Emancipate yourself to the full extent of your own pleasure; that I cannot hinder; but allow me also my personal liberty."

This gratuitous sally both irritated and grieved me at the same time. I sat motionless, with my eyes filled with tears, and reflected whether and in what manner I should reply, when St. Orme's

voice was heard without in the saloon. My stepmother then rose with a sort of alarm, saying to me: "Say I am unwell and cannot receive him." Having pronounced these words she hastened to her chamber.

"Alone!" exclaimed St. Orme, as he entered. "Where are the others to-day?—I come to say farewell to you for some weeks. I am going to W——'s to breathe the spring air and to hunt. But you will certainly have a great longing after me."

I was silent. Just at that moment, I could not speak, and still less was I able to say what I thought.—"I rejoice uncommonly that you are going your ways."

"You do not speak," St Orme continued. "And silence gives confirmation — they say. Where are the other ladies? Do they propose not being seen to-day?"

"My stepmother finds herself unwell and can receive no one," I replied. "Flora has just gone to her brother, and Selma is busy in some other place,"

"It looks then as if we were to have a *tête-à-tête*," St. Orme pursued. "I have no objection to that, for I must say some few things to you. Listen, my excellent sister-in-law, I have some grounds for believing that you do not render me the best service in the family here. In what do I offend you, if I may be allowed the question? Perhaps I have not been sufficiently courteous towards you, not flattered you enough. However, I counsel you, as your friend, not to intrigue against me, for you have "*affaire à trop forte partie.*" You would do better to come over to my side and persuade Flora, by fair means, to accede to that which she cannot avoid."

"I do not understand you," I replied with a tolerable degree of pride, "and intrigues I understand still less; but I mean ever candidly to express my honest thoughts, if they are solicited by any one; and neither flattery nor threats can prevent me from it."

"Superb, and especially Finnish to the full," said St. Orme, regarding me with a cold and sarcastic expression, which might have embarrassed me, if it had not had precisely the opposite effect of nerving me with strength. "I see how things stand," he continued after a moment's pause, still with his cold sneer, "and I will tell you how they will be All your Finnish arts of magic will prove ineffectual and the victory in the long run will be *mine*. Adieu, bear my regards to all. Do not forget me."

At these words he seized my reluctant hand and shook it with a malignant air of triumph. The same moment Flora entered and her mistrustful mind led her to perceive a bond of friendship in that which was almost the opposite. She cast some fiery glances at St. Orme and me, and turned her back to him as he approached her. He then said coldly:

"*Adieu, belle cousine! Au revoir*," and went away.

"How have you and St. Orme so speedily become good friends again?" asked Flora approaching me with almost wildness in her looks. "Have you deliberated with him in order to betray me? Confess it, confess it honourably, Sophia. You wish not that I should become Lennartson's partner. You think him too good for me; you wish him another. Deny it not. I am not so easily deceived, and I have long seen through you. But in truth, to concert a plot with St. Orme too——I did not believe that you would carry your hate so far."

This fresh instance of injustice occasioned me rather painful than angry feelings. "O Flora, what wrong you do me! But you are unhappy and I pardon you."

With these words I left the room.

I discovered it was fated that I should be misunderstood at home that day, and I felt a certain longing to get into the fresh air. I therefore dressed and went out.

It seemed to me as if the heavy cloud which had so long hovered above me, then suddenly broke upon my head, with all its lightnings. I fancied I was selected for a sin-offering and would be burthened with the atonement for all the faults and errors of others; a thousand excited feelings swelled my heart, till I went out of the door and felt the air blow cool about my temples.

The spring had breathed upon the earth and it thawed fast; foot-passengers trod circumspectly upon the melting ice, glistening drops trickled from the roofs. The sky was lurid, but here and there the clouds opened their heavy eyelids, to give passage to some pale rays of light, which resembled a smile through tears. The atmosphere was tranquil and rather heavy, but all around you heard the twitterings of a thousand little warblers disporting on the leafless trees, and there was in the air I know not what kind of freshness and fragrance—saturated with the spirit of spring —which called to my remembrance the ocean and the forests of fir. I paused involuntarily upon the field, studded with trees in front of the Palace, drunk in the vernal breeze in deep draughts, listening to the roar of the stream and letting my eyes range over the varying world about me. And then I fancied a breath from Finland's heaths came floating upon me and awoke in me the spirit of early days. Clouds and mists dispersed, and, like the lark when at its carolling, rose again to my imagination those bright, great thoughts which make life beautiful. The unspoiled innocency of my childhood triumphed within me, and—in a word, I was transformed.

I know not whether—as one of my lady friends asserts—"it is better to be a *Troll* (enchantress) than a mere cipher;" but certain it is that there is in my nature something of that magic which is said to have had its home in my native land from the first dawn of time. What this "something" is I myself do not understand, but I feel it to be some *marvellous* power endued with the capacity of *volition* and ability to *act*. When conscious of its presence nothing is impossible to me. I feel I have a potent spell, able to bind or deliver other spirits.——*Primitive Words* stir within me; nay, there have been moments in which I felt that I could spell-bind a human soul to me and—*I have accomplished such.* In my young days there was a great deal of the heathen sorceress about me. At a later period of my life this was washed away by the living waters of suffering, burned out in the fire of love, but it is not yet entirely extinguished from my nature, and at times it quite unexpectedly kindles into life. I know that it has

already put many a trick upon me, but I am also aware that, in many instances, when reason has not come to my assistance, witchcraft has, and enabled me to find words and tunes to charm the fetters of existence from me, leaving me free; and like the Wäinemöinen of antiquity, to sing till both Sun and Moon shone down upon my tree of life. And hours there are in which I can make me a Hippogriff of every stick that lies as an impediment in my way, and bestriding it, can post through the narrowest chimney of life, not exactly up to the summit of the Bläkulla—the witches' cliff—but out in the fresh, pure air.*

The hardest thing attending these moments in which my life possesses such potent energy, is this—that there are no great difficulties to surmount, no obstructions to subdue, no heroic deeds to achieve. And such, too, was my sad situation in the present instance. For to seek, find and purchase, and lay at my stepmother's feet, a splendid carpet for the ante-room,—a carpet with a sky-blue ground and strewed with stars and flowers and necromantic figures, required not the exertion of any magic powers. However, I derived pleasure from it, and rejoicing *in petto* at the thought of triumphing over St. Orme and Flora and the whole world, and writing letters to all my fair friends—for it is remarkable what great things I effect at such moments—I rambled at random along the quays on the banks of the river and gazed at the ice breaking in the Knight's bay and the sky brightening gently up above the liberated waters. My spirit then conducted me down to the Parterre beside the stream, and to that part where the waves foam with the greatest fury.

Ah, it was on this spot that I once stood with William Brenner, heard the waves swell in his bosom, and saw the heaven of his eye brighten into sunshine; and the remembrance of this obtruded itself with painful force upon my heart, but——kind heaven! was it reality? was it *he* who stood there again, leaning upon the iron-railing, and looking down upon the foaming deep! it was *he;* a glance was sufficient to convince me of this, and I slowly approached him: the spell was alive within me; I knew that he would not escape me, I knew that I had power over him at that moment. The life, strength of will, and ardour of feeling of which I was then conscious, words have not power to express; but I conjured all this into my hand, and laid it lightly on his arm. He started as if struck by an electric shock, and looked me in the face with a stedfast and full gaze. I quietly regarded him, and whispered merely:

"William."

He continued gazing at me, but his look changed; it took the expression of ineffably melancholy tenderness, and with a sigh from the depth of his bosom, he said:

"Sophia, is it thou?"

And we addressed each other not with *you*, but *thou*, for we were then inly *united*.

Again he spoke slowly and gently: "Is it *thou*, Sophia? a long time has elapsed since I saw thee."

"Art thou still angry with me?" I asked, and my tears flowed, for I perceived in his countenance that he had suffered greatly.

"I could not be," he answered, "I could not be angry if it were my will. The thought of thee softens my heart, and when thou lookest thus upon me with thy clear beautiful eyes, then I think all is well. Thou knowest indeed thy power, Sophia."

"O William, then we are friends, friends for ever! it cannot be otherwise unless my errors separate us. I have never had a brother, but I have strongly wished to possess one: be a brother to me."

He made no reply, but he only looked at me with a gentle though serious expression; but I was made so happy by this gentleness of deportment in him—so happy at having found my friend again, and been made aware of the strong intimate harmony which united us, that I regarded the new league as concluded, and from the fulness of my heart I spoke to him of the connection which had subsisted between us, how it should be in future, the sublimity and sweetness of friendship, and its power to ennoble the heart and give beauty to life. He listened calmly to me, but answered not; at last he broke off the conversation with some abruptness, saying:

"Hast thou been happy at home since I last saw thee, how is it with Lennartson and Flora, what is St. Orme doing?"

I felt happy to be able to open my heart to Brenner, and tell him what had occurred during his absence. On informing him of St. Orme's deportment, and his menacing me, the Viking took fire, and was going to leave me on the instant and repair to him for satisfaction.

"He has gone on a journey," I hastened to apprise him, "and will not return for some time, ('consult with the storm on the means of calming the tempest,') I added aside, while the Viking was muttering reproaches on St. Orme for his intrigues, Flora, for her want of sincerity, and myself for not having before remonstrated with her, and communicated to him an affair which concerned Lennartson so closely.

"Behold, I am once more in a dilemma," thought I. "I am ever doomed to be the author of misfortune."

"The only consideration that in some measure quiets my solicitude," continued Brenner, "is my belief that it will be a fortunate thing for Lennartson if he can get quit of Flora in an honourable manner; in point of fact she is entirely unfitted for him, and I must greatly deceive myself if he does not feel the same himself, and secretly in the depth of his heart, incline to another——what dost thou think, Sophia? is it not Selma whom he really loves, as she, in my judgment, is created to make him happy."

I could not but tell Brenner that I privately participated in his solicitude and wishes; but Flora also lay at the bottom of my heart. Her rich intellectual gifts and her excited and unhappy state had bound me to her.

"If St. Orme but returns home," said Brenner. He did not complete his sentence, but I read in his inmost heart the resolve by fair or forcible means to compel him to declare himself.

We had by this time reached my residence, and being obliged to separate, I said in a tone of entreaty to the Viking:

* In the event of this MS. falling into strange hands, I herewith declare emphatically, that the above must not be taken as literally true.

"You will assuredly come to us again, to me, my brother William?"

"Yes, I shall come."

"When?"

"When it is your pleasure."

"To-morrow?"

"To-morrow."

"Thanks."

He pressed my hand warmly and kindly as before, and happier and more buoyant in spirit than I had felt for a long time, I hastened into my chamber, there in the peace and fulness of my heart to chant my *Te Deum*.

Then I thought on the subject of concluding peace with my stepmother; but a little diplomacy was required in setting about that.

People who are good at bottom always speedily repent the warmth and injustice into which their infirmities of temper betray them; and I was by this time sufficiently acquainted with my stepmother to be assured that in her inmost heart she regretted the precipitancy she had evinced towards me, and would gladly make me "*amende honorable*," if it could be done consistently with her position and dignity. At that time to have approached her with the new carpet would have humbled her; she could not have supported this and her injustice together. The affair must be effected in some other wise.

I therefore went down-stairs, entered the room —in which my stepmother was sitting on the sofa, with rather a grieved and embarrassed air, while Selma read at the window—as if nothing had transpired, and with a bold front, feigned to be in great need of some black silk for my dress.

With a, "I really think I have some," my stepmother was speedily up from the sofa and away to her trunks, in which she soon discovered several pieces of black silk, which with the most friendly zeal she begged me to accept and make use of; and I suffered her to make me a donation of them and some beautiful black lace besides, which I had not desired, but which my stepmother in the warmth of her heart, required to bestow upon me; now, on this there could be fastened without the slightest constraint, a little dissertation on prohibitive enactments, luxury and political economy; and of these too I received more than I wished: but my heart was attuned to gratitude, and I took the silk lace, and dissertation with due propriety.

After my stepmother had lightened herself so considerably of articles of luxury and knowledge, I could without scruple encumber her with the carpet; I resolved, however, to wait till morning. I was now on my part satisfied with the posture of affairs, surrendered myself to the opinion that such too was the case with my stepmother, and went in peace to my room. It was therefore no slight surprise for me when I saw my stepmother enter my apartment, and heard her say with the most amiable kindness and with tears in her eyes:

"I must beg pardon of Sophia for my morning's violence. I know not how I could deport myself so unhandsomely. But you are well aware that your old mamma's intentions are not so very bad, though she is at times irritable, when her heart is too sorely oppressed. However, I can scarcely pardon myself."—

This in truth was a great deal and, from a feeling of profound veneration, I was well nigh falling prostrate at the feet of my stepmother. We merely fell into each other's arms however, but with more hearty feeling our bosoms had never before joined, or rather it was the first time they had thus met. I was strongly excited, as, on such occasions, has long been my wont. My stepmother was less moved, but she spoke well and elegantly about herself and faults, and that it was our duty at every period of life to strive after improvement. Coinciding in sentiment as she did with Madame de Genlis, when she said:

"I cannot bear to hear old people say: 'I am too old to improve.' I myself would rather pardon young people for saying: 'I am too young for that.' It is precisely when we are not young that our most especial endeavours must be to perfect ourselves and seek by good qualities to compensate for what we lose in point of agreeableness."

I admitted, from thorough conviction, that my stepmother and Madame de Genlis were correct in this * and begged the favour of writing down those words for my own use; and satisfied with each other and with ourselves, too, a little, we then separated.

4th April.

The carpet was this morning laid down with great joy by the people of the house and gave reception to my stepmother when she came down to breakfast. She was as surprised and delighted at it as I could possibly wish, and Selma regained her former vivacity and danced about before her mother on the flowers and stars of the pattern.

This little occurrence has diffused a little appearance of joy through the family.

"An interchange of gifts makes friendship firm," says one of our old maxims of prudence.

My stepmother is occupied now with cheerful thoughts about our soirée for Wednesday and has entreated us, as the daughters of the house, to make our toilettes beautifully and elegantly.

5th April.

The Viking has been appointed to the command of the frigate *Désirée*, which is to sail in the Spring on an expedition to the Mediterranean. He will be away *one* perhaps *two* years. This news surprised me. Why will he—But perhaps it is best thus. Yet—it falls heavily upon me.

8th April.

Yesterday was our soirée; it was a fine one and went off well. Flora, who since St. Orme's absence breathes more freely, had once again one of her periods of beauty and bloom. She—as on the first evening I saw her—was dressed in red gauze, Selma in light blue crape, I in white French lawn garnished with lace. My stepmother regarded us with pleasure when we assembled in a room previously to the arrival of the guests, and she was proud of her daughters, called them "*les trois Grâces*" and declared my appearance to be "vestal."

A profusion of splendid flowers adorned the room—it was quite festive and beautiful. The new carpet shone beneath our feet and warmed the heart of my stepmother. Such an evening par-

* But I beg my stepmother's pardon; it is not Madame de Genlis, but Madame de Sévigné, who, in her letters, has written those excellent words.

ticipates in the fate of all earthly things ; and although it is not worth while to lay great stress upon it, yet it is an agreeable thing, notwithstanding, when joy, and not vexation, is the presiding spirit of the entertainment.

A great deal depends upon the circumstance, whether or no anybody in company will take in hand the magic wand of animation ; and on this evening the Sylphide was the fair magician who wound her invisible floral links round all present.

As my stepmother herself gave reception to her guests in the inner ante-chamber, all collected there, and it was thronged and warm in the room, till Selma, taking the arm of Hellfrid Rittersvärd, proposed to her and some other young ladies that they should "establish a colony" in another apartment. They emigrated, and were speedily followed by several of the party, and in a short time the colony, as Selma playfully remarked to her young friend, was in a very flourishing condition. Ladies and gentlemen did not, as, alas! is the custom in our northern social circles, divide themselves into separate groups, but joined each other in little coteries, endeavoured to make themselves mutually agreeable and thus arose a spirited and brisk conversation. Our having also some literary, scientific and musical 'notables'—some "Lions" (NB. of the noblest species) among us, considerably enhanced the splendour of the evening.

My stepmother was brilliant. Hellfrid Rittersvärd and her bridegroom looked heartily happy and their agreeable, easy and calm deportment diffused, as usual, complacency about them. A toast of which they were the subject, was proposed at supper by my stepmother, and drunk with enthusiasm.

Flora's sister, the "Beauty," looked uncommonly destitute of attractions. You plainly saw that her youth was passed, and that those days were coming upon her when the world says of the fair : "They do not please me."

I have never liked Flora's sister especially, nor have I ever discovered more than two thoughts in her—the theatre and toilette—and on this account had gladly avoided any conversation with her. But this evening there was an expression of despondency and secret anguish in her countenance, which determined me to seek her when she retired for a while from the room in which the animated circle was assembled, into my stepmother's closet, which was illuminated only by the mild glimmer of a lamp, and decorated with white flowers. In this beautiful little world of bloom, sat the fading beauty, supporting her head on her hands. I spoke some kind words to her and my voice must have attested my sympathy, for she unexpectedly opened her inmost thoughts to me, and this was interesting to me.

"I feel," said she, among other things, "that I have sacrificed too much to the world. It and its inheritors are so ungrateful. I have wished too strongly to please men. Now I can no longer succeed in this. Now that I am no longer young and rich, and possess no more that which amuses or flatters them, now they retire from me, now they leave me forsaken, and I—I know not what to do. I fancy the world about me darkens—— I feel timid as if of spectres——it is so vacant, desolate——I have nothing to interest me——the day is so long to me——I feel wearisome."

The bitter tears which followed these words, indicated better than they the sadness of the fair complainer's situation. And what indeed is more heavy to bear than inanity of life? What indeed is more fearful than the twilight of life without a star in heaven, or a single light on earth?

But what is there to prevent us from kindling such a light for ourselves? Wherefore should we not 'borrow fuel' for it from a good neighbour? Ah! of light and warmth, objects of interest, activity and joy there is such an abundance in life, that nothing is more difficult to conceive than that people should feel tedium. When such is truly and actually the case, we must be bound hand and foot, and then—have our bonds released by benevolent hands. And a redeemed spirit, to which life begins to reveal itself in its beauty and grandeur—what a glorious thing it is!

At these words I, like a balloon filled with vital air, felt ready to mount on high, and boldly to take the "Beauty" with me on my journey—to the sun. I began to talk (and that too, as I thought, precisely like the Book of Proverbs) of life and its object, man and society, the relation of the individual to the entire community and the like, and then made an application to the particular circumstances of my listener, and proposed to her that she should adopt a few orphan children and train them to good and happy beings.

At these words the "Beauty" gazed at me with a pair of large eyes, full of astonishment. "Of a verity she had not thought of that," she said coldly, and a little offended at the proposal.

I then spoke of an interest in public institutions, the honour and happiness of presiding over an establishment for charitable purposes, and through such medium to benefit society by our life and activity. I mentioned my own plans and wishes to be active in that capacity, mentioned the excellent asylum for the orphan children as an object worthy of our attention, and in my zeal proposed to the "Beauty" a visit to it with me next day. And it was at that moment I perceived for the first time that she was regarding me with an expression of countenance which seemed to say : "Is the maiden of sane mind?" And simultaneously, also, I first observed that I had hoisted my sails too high. Half-smiling at myself, I endeavoured to make way to regions which lay nearer the "Beauty's" sphere ; but I found her to be so strange and callous to all that appeared beautiful and interesting to me, that I felt quite at a loss and did not breathe with any freedom till I saw the Court Chamberlain approaching us. With the eagerness with which we turn from an enemy to a friend, the Baroness Bella turned from me to my uncle, and in a sprightly manner expressed her gratitude to him for some marks of courtesy which he had evinced towards her, among which was the surrendering to her his box at the last performance of "Norma." "I am so full of gratitude," I heard her add.

"Ah, my excellent cousin," he added in his lively tone, "it would be better if you were full of chandeliers! For precisely at present I need some for a few rooms, and know not where I shall find them."

The Baroness Bella answered with a smile that, though she was no furniture depôt, still she could

direct him where he would meet with "perfectly divine" chandeliers.

The Court Chamberlain was indescribably glad at the idea of obtaining "divine chandeliers," and still more rejoiced that the unerring eye and taste of the Baroness Bella would light him to them. The visit of inspection to the chandeliers was appointed for the following day, and, with a side-glance at me, my uncle offered his box at the Opera for the next subscription night. She grew fuller and more full of gratitude and he, of courtesy; and I myself more and more superfluous in this *tête-à-tête* and left the party a little melancholy at heart—but yet a little amused also.

I returned to the other part of the company. The Viking was there, but he was disposed to seriousness, almost gloom, spoke to nobody, and did not approach me. This nettled me, especially as I had not seen him since the news of the long and adventurous voyage, on which he was soon to enter, had reached my ears. I would gladly have said something to him but had not courage for it. This evening I was possessed of no spell; I was nothing more than quite an ordinary woman. I saw by the Viking's looks that he was stormy, and this inspired me with fear.

They asked me to play something, and on my sitting down to the piano-forte, and seeing Brenner advance close to the instrument, it occurred to me that I might speak to him in tones and thus express to him what I could not clothe in words. I therefore selected one of Felix Mendelsohn's "Songs without words," of which the characteristic is ever-increasing triumph amid suffering and struggles; a song, a poem whose peculiar beauty has always deeply affected my heart. I projected my entire soul, too, into the execution of the melody; I wished to pour the feeling which animated me, into Brenner's heart, and elevate us both above earthly conflicts and earthly pains. And I fancied I felt that he understood me.

Lennartson, Selma, and several others had collected about the piano, and listened to the music: on my concluding, Brenner's expressive glance met mine. Lennartson said to him:

"This piece reminds me of the story of your Egyptian vulture, Brenner; relate it, and Miss Adelan shall say whether it does not contain the very words fitted for this music.

Brenner then narrated:

"It was in Egypt near to Thebes; I was one morning rambling about the desert in quest of sport, when at no great distance from me, I saw a vulture sitting among the ruins of crumbling monuments: this bird is known for its strong physical power; it is dangerous to approach it when wounded; it possesses almost incredible strength, I levelled at it and wounded it under the breast, and, as I concluded from its motions, mortally; nevertheless, it remained still in the same place, and I sprang towards it in order to complete my work; but at that instant the bird raised its wings and ascended in air: blood streamed from its breast and part of its viscera fell out, but in spite of all this it continued to rise in wider and more wide gyrations. A few shots which I sent after it had no effect; it was a fine sight to see that bird in the vast still desert, mortally wounded and dyeing the sand with its blood, quietly circling higher and higher on its huge wings; the last round it described was certainly a quarter of a mile in diameter, and then I lost sight of it in the blue ether."

"Ah, bless me, would that one had been in Egypt," said the Court Chamberlain, in his fine voice, "and had seen vultures and crocodiles and the like, that must be an interesting thing!"

"Ah, do tell us a little more about Egypt and the crocodiles," exclaimed little Miss M——.

"Is society in Egypt animated, and what is the tone of conversation there?" asked Krusenberg, the Royal Secretary.

I know not what Brenner said in answer to these attacks, I retired at their commencement. In the course of the evening we approached no more, but I perceived from his glance which was frequently fixed on me, that there was a swelling tide in his bosom—and such, to tell the truth, was the condition of mine. Brenner's prospective journey, the images called forth by the music and the story of the vulture, produced in me sweetly-sad emotions.

Whether it were a secret wish in both of us or mere accident I hardly know; but when all the guests had taken farewell, and my stepmother, Selma and Flora were accompanying the last out of the room, and lingered in conversation with them in the saloon, Brenner and I found ourselves alone in the closet with the blooming white flowers. We both stood still there, he excited and I embarrassed and constrained.

"You are going on a voyage," said I, at last.

He gave no answer.

"It is a long voyage," said I again, "do you stay long away?"

"Yes," he answered with half-suppressed excitement, "yes, I stay a long time away; I travel because it is too close and oppressive here at home; because I must seek free space in order to live—must away where I shall neither see nor hear you any more."

He seized my hand, and pressed it to his eyes; I felt that they were moist with tears.

"O," he pursued, "this is puerile: but let me indulge my visions for a while; it will soon be over; do not be anxious, Sophia: I have no other will or desire than to see you for a time, and feel happy in loving you, in loving you *thus*, although you have rejected me; I have never loved any one more strongly: I have been happy in this feeling, that we were created for each other, that you would consent——but that is past, and for the future when near to you, my affection would only be a torment to me. When the storm in my breast has laid itself I will return to my children and you. Think of me when I am far away——think that my heart is not of that class that you can despise. Weep not; truly, I am not complaining: I would have wished to love you less; on the waves of the ocean or amid the desolate scenes of Africa, I shall feel myself rich in this passion. Do not wish me to be free from it; in that case you would wish me unhappiness: it is my will to love you now and for ever. I defy you to make it otherwise, but ——this is the last time I will speak to you about it: and now farewell! farewell my Sophia, God bless you."

And before I could collect myself to reflection he had embraced and——quitted me.

This was a thunder-stroke: tranquil I was not

after it—perhaps I shall not be so for a long time, but when he shall have found peace on the roving ocean I shall be satisfied that——

15th April.

For several days past he has not shown himself here: it is so desolate for me, but I durst not utter my discontent: he does what is right and manly. This tender yet proud spirit will not complain or show his wounds, but like the bird of the desert, quietly conceal them and his pangs in the free elevated regions, into which no human eye penetrates. He is noble and has an ample mind, but I?——

At home for some days there has prevailed a peace which we have not known here for a long time. It arises from Flora's calm and easy state of mind; but how long will it last?

In the night between the 19th and 20th April.

Yesterday Flora was rather indisposed, and therefore stayed at home from a dinner to which my stepmother drove with Selma. I have a peculiar friendship for the sick, I look upon them as my children, and accordingly I deal with them in such a manner that they usually feel well under my treatment. It therefore gave me a little pleasure to be with Flora yesterday, and while I nursed her in a tender and playful manner, and we said a great many terrible things about our strong hatred, we approached each other nearer in heart than we had hitherto done. In the afternoon I read to her, while she reposed on the sofa in the inner room. On my pausing in my reading for the purpose of resting a little, Flora said:

"You are really most kind to me, Sophia, and if at any time I grow well, that is to say peaceful and contented in mind, perhaps I shall be in a situation to thank you, as at present I cannot.—I am not bad——but we may lose ourselves and become frantic when we are worried and persecuted as I for some time past have been. Haven't you observed a great change in me for some days?—this is due to my persecutor's leaving me at peace. I have known nothing about him for some time; I cannot conceive————can it be possible that he has in earnest gone away for ever—that I am delivered?—ah that it were so, then should a new——"

"How are things here?" asked a clear friendly voice, and Signora Luna showed her beautiful face at the door. She is ever a welcome visitor here, and though at this moment I wished her in the moon, because she interrupted a conversation which promised to be very interesting to me, yet she was received as she always is, and, throwing herself at her ease in a corner of the sofa, she continued:

"It is a most agreeable thing to me to find you both alone, for I had resolved upon settling down here for the afternoon and probing to the bottom of this thing and that: do you at home here really know what rumours are afloat in the city?"

"About what? Whom?" I asked.

"Flora. They say that she will marry St. Orme, and accompany him to Constantinople, whither in the spring he travels as ambassador. Can that be possible?"

"In truth I do not know," said I glancing at Flora.

Flora turned pale.

"The rattle-snake is at hand," she whispered as if to herself. "I hear him approaching."

"Ah, should we not know about things which we have close before our eyes!" said the Countess G—— half impatiently, half in pleasantry. "And the upshot of all is that Flora does not know whether she is engaged or not!—But what I know is that I will do all in my power to make those rumours unfounded. Flora is my own cousin, and I love Flora, and with my will she shall not be made unhappy; and unhappy she would be with St. Orme. He is a bad man, that I know. He destroyed his first wife, and would deal with his second in like manner, for—rely upon me—there is nothing so fatal in its effects on the body and spirit of man as an unhappy marriage."

The Countess's beautiful eyes filled with tears as she pronounced these words.

At the same moment we heard doors opened with violence, and proud footsteps passing through the rooms; immediately afterwards the great Alexander entered the chamber in which we were. After a short salutation to Flora and me, he turned with a peremptory air to his lady and said:

"I thought, my friend, you had heard me when I said this morning that I wished you not to go out this afternoon, but stay at home, till I returned from dining with L——."

"Ah, my excellent friend, I had entirely forgotten that. I did not think the affair was so important."

"Important?—It is not precisely my wont to say anything without good reason; and what I gave expression to this morning had been well pondered and had its very cogent grounds. A man's resolve is by no means to be thwarted by ladies' whims; I therefore hope you will be good enough instantly to follow me home."

"My excellent Alexander, let me remain quietly here now that I am once come. I am so well seated here and—I have something of importance to discuss with my friends. I will come home to you as soon as this is finished. Let me for once in my life do what I wish."

"By no means! You must have the kindness instantly to accompany me. And if you desire a good reason for this, here it is—It is my will. *Tout simplement.*"

"But I also have a will," exclaimed Signora Luna suddenly blazing into energy, while her eyes shot fire. "Hitherto it has lain torpid, but if you teach me to use it, it may prove stronger than yours. And now I *will* stay here; I go not away before it is my *will* to go. And if you do not consent to this separation I will soon seek a longer one."

The great Alexander was obviously much confounded at this unexpected outbreak of resolution and passion in his usually passive consort. He seemed to fear it and retired, muttering something to the air about "the follies and caprice of ladies."

He had scarcely gone before Lennartson came. The Countess G. wished not to show herself in his presence, visibly excited as she was, and therefore went away into another apartment. Here, after having composed herself in some measure, she said to me:

"It is, however, best that I should withdraw, after a time. I will not make him really angry, but merely show him that he durst not proceed too far with his authority. Alexander possesses very many good qualities and would possess many more if he did not busy himself with Aristotle. He and his logic have warped him entirely. And for such men it is not meet to have too compliant wives; for then they immediately become tyrants and I will show Alexander——But you go into the room, Sophia; I fancied Flora was uneasy when you left; go and do not take any concern about me. I will go my way in peace and quiet, when I think the time has come; for some time he must wait after this——But go into the room, go."

I obeyed the exhortation, eager to see what was going on between Lennartson and Flora.

As I entered, Flora was seated reading a letter Lennartson appeared to have put into her hands; he stood at the window, having fixed his searching eyes upon her. She was very pale, and, after a while said, as she put aside the letter:

"I cannot read it, my eyes grow dim. Read the letter to me aloud, Lennartson—Sophia, may hear all."

Lennartson took the letter and read it aloud with a firm voice. Its tenor was a warning to Lennartson to form no connection with Flora, with the admonition that, in the event of his having formed one, to dissolve it again. Flora was already bound to another *by the ties of love and honour*, and the proof of that should be made public, provided that the above admonition was not acted upon. To such extreme measures, however, recourse would be had with reluctance, and should Lennartson quietly forego his advances to Flora everything that might prove an annoyance to the latter should be buried in silence. The letter was subscribed "Anonymus," and obviously written in a disguised hand.

Unable longer to control herself, Flora exclaimed with frenzy: "Vile, crafty, abominable St. Orme."

"Then it is *he!*" said Lennartson with eyes flashing fire. "Then it is he who is the peace-breaker. I have long augured so; and now, Flora, *I will* know what right, what foundation he has for this. This hour must dissolve our connection or—confirm it for ever. I have more than once besought your full confidence, nay, implored it; to-day I must *demand* it."

"You shall learn all," exclaimed Flora with resolution. "You shall be my judge. But, O Thorsten, be mindful that God's highest attribute is—mercy."

Lennartson answered not. He sat there serious and gloomy, and seemed to await Flora's confession.

"Well, then," she exclaimed, seeming to make a violent effort, "all shall be revealed—This St. Orme dedicated his attentions to me five years ago when he was in Stockholm, and acquired a certain power over me. His bold assurance, his talents, his intellectual endowments, which I then deemed of a superior cast, made an impression upon me. I fancied I loved him. He abused my blindness, my inexperience, to seduce me into a secret epistolary correspondence, and pledge of eternal fidelity and the like. St. Orme, however, took very little concern about fulfilling the promises he made to me. I was then poor and he forsook me, to go to Paris, whence I heard nothing from him for a long time. In the interim I became acquainted with you, Lennartson, and felt what real affection was. I deemed myself forgotten by St. Orme, and also forgot him and my childish, foolish promises, ah, I forgot the entire world, when you, Lennartson, offered me your heart, and life arose in fresh beauty before me; but shortly afterwards I became *rich*, and St. Orme came back and enforced his former claims. He had forgotten Flora, but he remembered the rich heiress. And I well knew that it was not my heart he was then aspiring after, but my fortune; I no longer loved him, but—but I was obliged to spare him, and by kindness, endeavour to work upon his obdurate heart, in order to regain possession of those imprudent, unfortunate letters he had in his power, and which he was ungenerous enough to threaten he would make use of, if I did not break my engagement with you and consent to give him my hand.—Look, Lennartson, this is the secret of the obscurity, the conflicts and contradictions in my character for some months past. I have long hoped to be able to triumph over him, I have long contended for it—but this hour has convinced me that all is ineffectual. St. Orme has driven me to the extremity—to the confession of that which my pride, my feminine delicacy, my love to you, Thorsten, made me shun more than death. And yet, now that all is divulged, and this burden is removed from my heart—now I wonder I could deem it so terrible; for, Lennartson, *you* cannot lay much stress on an act of youthful imprudence—you cannot condemn me on account of a few foolish letters, deprive me of your love?"

"Have you told all, Flora, *all?*"

"I have told *all*."

"Farewell, Flora."

He extended her his hand; she held it fast and exclaimed with anxiety:

"Whither? For pity's, mercy's sake, tell me what you are going to do? What are you going to do?"

"By fair or violent means to tear those letters out of St. Orme's hands and restore them to you."

"Thorsten, you are my angel of deliverance!" cried Flora, throwing herself on her knees.

Lennartson had vanished.

Selma came home—alone. Her mother was spending the evening with Mrs Rittersvärd. Selma was then apprised of what had occurred and listened to the intelligence with astonishment; yet she seemed most surprised that Flora had not long since opened her heart to hers, to Lennartson. On hearing the latter's last words, however, she fell into great consternation, and exclaimed:

"'By fair or *violent means*,' Flora! And you allowed him to depart with such a purpose. You have placed his life at stake."

"Good heaven, can that be possible!" Flora broke out. "That did not occur to me. But no: St. Orme will not venture———"

"St Orme will hazard everything to retain you, Lennartson, to deliver you. St. Orme is known as a successful duellist; Lennartson shrinks from no danger, and I know that in certain cases the duel is, in his judgment———Flora, Flora, what have you done?"

"And what would you that I should have done? —Would you have me sacrifice myself?" asked Flora in a gloomy mood.

Selma wrung her hands in despair.

"By great good-fortune," Flora pursued, "St. Orme is not now in Stockholm, and——"

"The Envoy St. Orme is waiting without and craves permission to speak to Miss Flora," was at that instant announced by the Philosopher in his unearthly voice.

Flora turned pale. I fancy we all turned pale.

"Go Flora, do go," Selma entreated almost in a peremptory tone. "Go, talk to him. Prevent their meeting—save, save Lennartson."

Flora again regarded Selma with a gloomy expression, and then turned to me, saying:

"Will you go with me, Sophia? I will be no more alone with that man. But I will once more speak to him—essay the utmost."

I followed Flora.

St. Orme was standing in the great ante-chamber. He looked calm and composed, advanced to meet Flora, and was about to take hold of her hand. She stepped proudly back and cast a withering glance at him.

He regarded her coldly and then said: "I see how things are, and you—will certainly perceive it too. Very good. What do you say? But can we not speak without witnesses?"

"No! I will not again be alone with such a man as you."

"Aha! that sounds harsh. Very well then. You must impute the blame to yourself if anything comes to light which you would rather have had concealed."

"You are a base calumniator, Adrian St. Orme."

"Flora Delphin, let us avoid injurious words—at least for the time being;—at present they avail nothing. We will now speak frankly and rationally to each other. Let us view matters in their simplicity and truth, for what boots it to oppose ourselves to necessity?—You possess no better friend than I, Flora; and this I prove by abiding faithful to you notwithstanding your whims. I have ever dealt openly and honourably by you, even, too, in my having told you that you *must* be *mine*, and I would defy heaven and hell, in order to prevent your committing perjury. My love and my temper are of an entirely different calibre from those of common-place people—they proceed by higher ways and aim at higher objects. My will is not to be bent by storm and wind; what I will, I will in earnest, and——"

"Spare words, St. Orme," Flora said, interrupting him with impatience. "I know you now, and suffer myself no more to be infatuated by fine speeches. Tell me briefly what your wish is and then I will inform you of my resolve."

"My will you are already acquainted with—my love and my wishes are known to you. Rather permit me now to tell you your own will."

"*My* own will?"

"Yes, your own will at heart. What must needs be your will. Or, do you fancy I don't know you?—Do you fancy I will allow myself to be deceived by these convulsions of your feelings, these phantoms of a new love which have taken hold of your fancy!—Child, child, no one has yet reposed on my bosom without my looking into her inmost being and hearing her softest pulsation. And to *yours* I have listened with the ear of sympathy and love;—Flora, you are fettered to me by intimate, intimate bonds; not by your love, not by your oath, not by that which your affection has given me;—fettered you are by more potent ties,—the power of sympathy, by virtues and imperfections, yes, for even your imperfections are my imperfections and I see myself reflected in you. Fools bid men to put off their faults; I have loved yours and adopted them even in order to make you happy by them. Look around you, where will you find such love? And from it you will turn away, mistaking yourself and me!—Do you fancy it is your beauty, your talents which have knit me to you?—Hundreds possess such to a far greater degree than yourself. No, it is your profounder self, your sublime, eccentric nature, vacillating, hovering between heaven and hell. On the way that lies between those poles I will follow you, you *must* follow me—share condemnation or bliss! At this moment I offer you bliss. Know yourself. You are none of your northern damsels, Flora, and cannot be measured by the languid life of the north; you are of a southern nature and require a warmer sun to attain to your bloom. Therefore follow me to the East, to magnificent Constantinople, and there—learn fully what I am. For as yet you do not know me, Flora. It is a characteristic of my nature to reveal its depths only to full and complete abandonment to me. My love consumes the object it cannot make happy, and you yourself, Flora, must fear me from that hour you turn from me. I have used keen-edged weapons against you, I will continue to employ them up to the hour in which —you surrender yourself captive——But then, too, you shall make acquaintance with a love more intense than the glow of eastern climes, more beautiful than your own beautiful and fiery imaginings——believe me. You will not return to yourself till you return completely to me, the object of your first and strongest affection; you will experience the fulness of your being not till my arms enfold you. I know you better than you know yourself. For your own sake I exhort you: 'Return fully and completely to me, throw yourself into these arms, come to this breast and find there a heaven—no, *that* is vapid!—no, a *hell* of bliss.'"

And St. Orme was on his knees before Flora and stretched out his arms towards her.

She, during his discourse, had sunk her head upon her breast. When he had concluded, she raised it and drew herself slowly up saying in an excited tone of voice:

"What words! what expressions! I again recognise them—they strike on chords I thought were snapped asunder, but they vibrate still. O that I could but have faith in you and——But in vain! At this present time, while I am fascinated by your words, I feel, I know, that your object is only to deceive me, that you love me not, that you are merely playing a part. O, St. Orme, how great, how glorious you would be, were you but *honest*. But in this greatest and meanest quality you are deficient, and by lacking it lack all things."

St. Orme sprang up as if struck by an arrow, and a great change took place in him. His arms, open but a moment before, crossed upon his breast, the red of his cheek turned to pallor, and

with icy scorn he advanced to Flora and said: "In that case you may the more readily extend me your hand, for assuredly you will not seriously assert that you are what the people call 'an honourable maiden.'"

Flora felt the stroke as keenly as St. Orme had felt his. Glowing with anger she exclaimed:

"Yes, *too* honourable, *too* good I am in truth to be yours, base man. And let what will come to pass I will never become your wife!"

"You will be mine or nobody's wife, and pass to the grave with a sullied reputation. If it is your will to have me as an enemy, why, I will deal by you accordingly."

"Do so. I fear you not, wretched craven. Thorsten Lennartson will soon deliver me from you and your injuries. I have seen you pale and quail before him—You shall for once cope with one possessed of strength capable of bending your own."

On the delivery of this remembrancer, St. Orme's pale cheeks took colour; with a vindictive smile he said:

"Thorsten Lennartson will renounce you when I show him certain letters, especially *a* certain letter——My poor dear Flora. You appear to have grown a little oblivious and absolutely no longer to remember the letter in which you invited——"

Flora here interrupted him with a torrent of words and expressions with which I will not pollute my paper. Their tenor, in the main, was, that St. Orme had made use of her credulity and imprudence to cast suspicion upon her intentions and demeanour. But it was not an innocent offended woman that spoke in Flora; it was a fury.

St. Orme listened to her with coolness, and when she became silent from faintness he said:

"When you have becalmed yourself you will perceive, that all this avails nothing. You in every point of view have but *one* resolution to take, and that is to accompany me next month as my consort to Constantinople. You have made the way more difficult but it remains still open. Shall I point it out to you?"

Flora did not answer, and St. Orme continued.

"You write, even this day, to Lennartson and tell him that, owing to an earlier engagement which you had forgotten, you must forego the honour of becoming his partner. You know best how that will turn out. And, accordingly, you give your hand to your former faithful lover and—he will conduct you to his beautiful estate near Constantinople."

"Know, St. Orme," exclaimed Flora, "if you are successful in this—and a something tells me at this moment that you will succeed—you usher your own unhappiness, your own Nemesis into your house."

At these words she rose, and pale and with outstretched hand and fearful emphasis she pursued: "For I shall hate you, Adrian, hate you so that you yourself shall be terrified and afraid of—your own wife! Yes, do smile. One day you will not smile, one day I shall see you——take care of yourself, St. Orme. You have excited a terrible thirst in me. You have inspired me with desire to approximate near to you, to become your wife solely with a view to punish you and avenge myself. There—but mind—there take my hand, take it if you dare do so, take it and—my eternal hatred."

"I take it and your hatred. I have sometimes amused myself with subduing indifference;—now I have an itching to attempt converting hatred into love. In that I only follow the precepts of Christianity——Agreed, fair bride. On Sunday they shall thrice publish our banns in the church, and in a week we will be married. But I like your handsome struggle and prompt resolve. They really merit a bridegroom—kiss."

After pronouncing these words, he took her by force in his arms and kissed her;—thus it is that the spirits of the Abyss embrace each other.

With a shudder, and a hideous "Pah" Flora returned to reflection. St. Orme had vanished.

At that moment Selma appeared at the door and quietly beckoned me to her. I went and she whispered quickly: "Brenner is here. He wished to meet St. Orme, who he knew had come hither. In my anxiety I told him something of what had occurred here and the meeting I dreaded between St. Orme and Lennartson. He seemed resolved to forestall it by fighting first with St. Orme. I had trouble in keeping him back thus long till the interview within has terminated, and he can hear the result from you. Come now and speak to him: tell us how things stand."

And she led me to Brenner, who was in my stepmother's closet. I found him in a violent mood and so impatient to rush upon St. Orme that it was only with trouble I kept him back, by telling him what turn the affair had taken and letting him perceive my doubt whether Flora was worthy of imperilling the life and limb of men like Lennartson and Brenner. I urgently entreated him to remain quiet for that day at least and to wait further intelligence on the subject. I promised early next morning to write to him about it.

With this promise Brenner took his departure and Selma and I went in to Flora.

The latter was pacing the room with violence, spoke aloud to vacancy, and appeared not to notice us.

"It is well, exceeding well," she exclaimed. "All is now decided; there is no alternative and no pain of indecision. He has won the game. But do not rejoice at it. You have closed *one* future career upon me, but opened another to my view. Now I shall have a new object and a new interest in life which is to plague, to torture and to punish you."

"Flora!" exclaimed Selma with an indescribable expression of pain and tenderness.

"Yes," Flora continued. "He shall learn whom he has made subject to himself. Ha! Adrian St. Orme, we shall see, we shall see. Long have I hovered mid-way between heaven and hell—the latter is triumphant. Very good! I will profit by its schooling, I will become expert in its arts, more expert than he. A woman ever becomes more adroit in such things than a man."

"Flora, Flora!" Selma again exclaimed.

"Who calls Flora?" demanded the latter, wildly. "Is it my good angel, why, then let him learn that he calls me too late. I will no longer listen to him. I have now other things to do; and whether they condemn or weep over me—is all the same, I take no concern about it. Every thought and every feeling in me, is hatred and revenge. Ah, that I could duly avenge myself!"

She stood still for a while, as if in reflection, then clapped her hands and cried:

"I have it, I have it! He fancies he will acquire wealth with me, but he shall be deceived. As soon as I am wedded to him, I will become a spendthrift and a gamester; I will squander my fortune in every possible way, contract debts, tangle him in a net of distress and discomfort. Ha, wily St. Orme, how deceived you shall be! To have expended so much labour, craft and eloquence to introduce poverty and hatred into your house! Gold and hate you might buy; but poverty and hate,—if they enfold you in their embrace, then we shall probably see that brazen front of yours grow pale, that bold look quail—then you will desire to escape, but—you shall not have it in your power."

In this strain and in this spirit Flora long continued to rave.

Selma had vanished in the interim.

It had become dusk; a boisterous storm was raging over the fields, showers of hail and rain came rattling to the earth. The tumult of the elements seemed to quiet that of Flora's spirit. She became more still and still. For a long time she stood at the window contemplating the conflict without. After a while her tears began to flow.

She wept long and seemed to find alleviation in it.

When she had in some measure composed herself she sat down to her writing-table saying:

"Now I will write to Lennartson and entreat him to give up every thought of me. I will say to him that I am unworthy of his affection and respect. This is not the truth, but what does that signify? I thereby save him from all danger and —I myself am now an object of perfect indifference to myself."

Deeply moved by these words, I exclaimed: "Wait, defer it still for a time, Flora: let us reflect and deliberate; some way out of the dilemma, or some assistance there must be."

"No, there is none," sighed Flora, with a sort of calm resignation. "And I am weary of labouring and struggling against an inevitable doom. This St. Orme is the dark minister of my fate, and I will be the same to him: this I feel. O, this Lennartson, so rigorous and yet so good; —he alone could have delivered me; yes, if he could have loved me as I do him—above everything; but he could not love me thus: and entirely unworthy of his affection I am not—— I have in me a something which under his protection and at his side might have attained to great beauty. O Lennartson, had I become yours, how different I should have been, how different would all have been; what you had loved I should have loved also; and talents, and fortune, all the gifts I possess, and which are now to be applied to ill purposes, would in your hand have become a blessing: O, to stand so close to such an object and to see it vanish from the sight; to hold in one's hand the choicest lot that life affords, and behold it snatched away; to be constrained to renounce a Lennartson—to become a contemned and contemptible prey to a St. Orme! O, wherefore can I not die?"

And in another outburst of the most violent pain, Flora cast herself prostrate on the floor.

At that instant a gleam of light broke through the clouds into her room, and my fancy pictured a white dove, coming down and spreading her wings over Flora.

It was Selma, who with the lightness of a bird flew into the room, settled down on her knee beside Flora, and, throwing back a light-coloured shawl which enveloped her head and shoulders, exclaimed as she stretched out her hands:

"No, live, live, my Flora; live and be happy: here are your letters!"

In her hand she held a glossy leather case of red Atlas.

Joyfully ejaculating "My letters, my letters!" —Flora rushed upon her.

"You are free, Flora," pursued Selma with a voice which appeared stifled by emotion: "St. Orme renounces you, he will speedily depart, you are free, be happy, be happy!"

"Selma, what do you say!" exclaimed Flora, "are you beside yourself or I! how—how—how did you—"

With abrupt and eager inquiries both Flora and I beset Selma; but she did not answer us—she heard us no more: entirely senseless she lay on the floor, with hair and garments drenched with rain.

We bore her to bed, but ineffectual were our attempts to recall her to life; I quickly got a messenger despatched to my stepmother, and another to Dr. L——the physician to the family: soon they both stood beside Selma's bed, my stepmother with a face—almost like death, equally pale with that of her beloved daughter.

After they had opened a vein in Selma, she returned to life but not to reflection. Her mind was alienated in an awful manner.

The bright, friendly-looking eyes were now wild and glassy, and appeared striving to avoid the sight of some dreaded object. She drew me towards herself, and said in a half-whisper:

"Do you know, it was shocking! I met him just as I came out of hell; and he looked at me with such terribly flaming eyes—"

"Who looked in this manner upon you, my dear Selma?" I inquired.

"He—St. Michael—you know, now. I was preparing to fly, but he held me back, and traced a mark on my forehead with his finger, because I had been among the wicked, and since then it has burnt there, and I know that I can no more show myself before men; they all regard me with such looks of terror, you too———I do indeed look terrible."

"You are sick, Selma, and therefore all look so anxiously at you; but you yourself look like a good angel as you are."

"Yes, you say so, but he knows better, he who saw me there——he would have killed me, he would have transfixed me with this spear, if I had not fled. Yes, I fled from him but I felt that all was over with me, that I was branded; and the whole world flies from me because I fled."——

"You should not talk so much at present, Selma, you must try to sleep."

"Sleep? no, I shall never sleep again; it burns here too strongly." She passed her hand across her forehead. "And in every place I see that look—the look; it will keep me awake till the day of judgment. No, I can sleep no more."

While I was listening to these frightful visions of the fancy, and inquiring ineffectually into the cause of them, Dr. L—— explained the subject to my stepmother by the words "*inflammation of the*

brain," but *slight* inflammation. He said that the above malady was at that very time widely prevalent and that it frequently assailed its victim very violently,—in many instances, without any visible causes. We immediately used all the means he prescribed, and which are customary with such patients. Selma's head was pillowed high, the room kept dark and quiet, and cold applications laid upon her burning head. In the midst of my arrangements for those matters, I was called out of the room. In the antechamber I found Lennartson, but in a state I had never before seen him in—pale and excited.

"Where, where is Selma?" he asked eagerly, "what had she to do at St. Orme's? who sent her thither?"

"You cannot possibly suspect Selma of anything iniquitous or wrong?" I inquired.

"She? impossible! but I distrust others; I fear they abuse her self-sacrificing affectionate disposition."

"How and when did you meet Selma?"

"A short time since I went in quest of St. Orme; a lady wrapped in a white shawl was just coming out of his room; some rude young men on the steps endeavoured to detain her; I delivered her from them, and remarking that she trembled, I took her hand to escort her down—when I recognised—Miss Selma; she tore herself from me, and fled so quickly that I could not say a word to her; I was not willing to pursue her—but now I must know wherefore she was there."

In as few words as possible I related to the Baron everything that had taken place.

We now perceived that Selma, urged by a momentary impulse to save Flora, and anticipate a meeting between St. Orme and Lennartson, had hastened to the residence of the former, sustained solely by her enthusiasm and self-sacrificing affection. But by what talisman she had been able to charm from St. Orme's hands the treasure which he had so long guarded with the eagerness of a dragon was incomprehensible to us.

Lennartson was deeply dejected when apprised of Selma's present condition; being late in the evening, he was obliged to depart. "I will come again to-morrow, early," said he. He also inquired about Flora, but seemed scarcely to listen to my answer.

O, it becomes clearer and more clear to me on whom his affection is fixed.

20th April, in the morning.

Now the night is past, but what a night; Selma was delirious without a moment's cessation. The visions of her imagination reverted again and again though under different forms; and now I well understand the occasion of them. O my poor young sister! when morning came she desired myrtle and flowers, and commenced twining a garland which she calls "Flora's bridal wreath;" she zealously perseveres in her labour, but her hands continue to drop down from debility, and the work does not advance. She also sings scraps from her gayest ditties, but completes none. My poor stepmother goes about with mute anguish in her eyes, and seems to ask: "How speeds the distemper? what turn will it take?" Flora, having watched through the night with me, has this morning driven to her sister's. I have written to Brenner, and quit no more my Selma's chamber, in which I write these lines.

In the Evening.

Still the same; Selma continues weaving her chaplet, but complains that it will not come to completion; at intervals she sings: Dr. L—— looks anxious and talks of having her hair cut off; her beautiful hair!

Lennartson has called several times to inquire after her health; this evening straw was spread out in front of the house, in order to damp the rattling of the passing vehicles. This it should seem is due to Lennartson's care. Brenner also has been here, but I have not seen him.

21st April.

Another night of unspeakable trouble and distress of mind; Dr. L—— does not think she can live twenty-four hours longer unless a happy crisis appear.

*Jernnätter** is the name applied by the Swedes to certain nights about the Midsummer season, on which frost makes its appearance and breathes upon the blooming earth. Frequently it is fatal in its effects, destroying in a few hours the hopes of an entire year. At such times the sky is clear and the air unmoved, and when the sun rises the corn-fields glisten in their argent mantles, but it is the *mantle of death*,—an icy garment amid whose folds the bloomy ear lies blighted.

In human life, too, such *Jernnätter* appear, killing the young, the joyous, the blooming; but happy are the latter when they do not die in heart only, when they are not fated to linger on earth, like the withered ears on the field, sapless, and bereft of vital energy! Selma, thou youthful, good spirit; I can hardly bring myself to wish that you may live—for in thy delirious imaginings my ear detects with increasing distinctness, the secret of thy heart, thy voiceless pangs: but shouldst thou depart, how desolate!

Later.

A change appears going forward in Selma; she still continues delirious, but her ravings assume a more coherent character. She now fancies she will die, and has called me several times to her merely to say to me:

"When I am dead remain in place of me with my mother. Love her. She is so good!"

Flora is with us only for moments, she cannot bear to hear and see Selma. She is mostly with her sister.

In the Evening.

O, now there is an hour of hope! May it not be disappointed. In the afternoon Selma called me and said:

"Now I am dead, Sophia. You perceive I am lying in my grave; and it were well to be there, too, if I could but rest, if I could but sleep. They do usually sleep in the grave, don't they? To sleep and forget—till you awake in the presence of God. I wonder why I cannot sleep like other people—ah, yes, I know, I know why——it is that look of his. Have you seen him?"

"Seen whom, my sweet Selma?"

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* Iron nights.

"St. Michael! It is his flaming look which burns me and keeps me awake in the grave.—But I know, now, that when I shall one day see him in light, beyond the clouds, he will look upon me in quite a different manner. I know that all wickedness is due to the darkness prevailing on earth, which is so great as to prevent our seeing things as they really are."

At these words a thought flashed quickly upon me, and, endeavouring to fall in with her ideas, I said that I had seen him of whom she spoke, and that he did not contemn her, but would be glad to see her in light and regard her with affection.

"If I could believe that," said Selma with a look of melancholy joy, "I should become more tranquil. If he would look a blessing upon my grave, it would penetrate through the earth and into my coffin; my distress would then cease and I could sleep in peace. But tell nobody in the world," she eagerly pursued, "tell nobody in the world that I loved him. Say to all: 'She loved nobody but her papa, her mamma, her friend Flora, and her sister Sophia.' And tell not Flora that Selma died for her. Say that I was stung by a worm* and became so sick, death-sick in consequence."

While Selma was thus speaking in a loud and full-toned voice, and with cheeks glowing from fever, a low noise arose in the room and on looking round, I saw Lennartson and Flora standing at the back of her pillow. They appeared to have heard all; he held his hand upon his breast, and seemed to breathe with difficulty.

Agreeably to the instructions of the physician, Selma's head was pillowed high, and she maintained in a half-sitting posture; her beautiful hair fell down in undulations, and she had placed upon her own head the half-finished chaplet which she had been twining for Flora. The victim gloomy death was emulous to embrace was a lovely one; it was the Sylphide who had lost her wings, but who, even while sinking to the torpor of dissolution, could not lose her beauty.

Gloomy visions seemed again to rise on her spirit. "No, no!" she exclaimed, with her extended hands folded in supplication. "Hurl me not down into the dark abyss. Indeed I have no will to do evil. Help me, Lennartson."

And at the same instant Lennartson stood before her, placed her outstretched hands in his, and said with an expression of unspeakable affection:

"What does Selma fear? Lennartson is here. In life and to death he will defend you. Look at me, Selma, and believe me."

She did look at him, at first with a glance in which shyness and surprise were blended, but which soon changed at sight of the strong expression that came from Lennartson's bright, beaming eye. He seated himself on the edge of her bed and continued to regard her with a calm and steady gaze. And strange! in this look the strained expression of her eyes disappeared, and their sweet, clear aspect returned. They exchanged not a word; but it seemed as if that unspoken harmony of their nature which had hitherto been confined now effused itself in smooth currents, uniting and blessing them. Over the countenance of the poor patient an expression of endless peace continued to diffuse itself, her wearied eyes drooped their lids, and she fell into a quiet slumber. For a long time after this Lennartson sat there, with his eyes fixed on the countenance of the sleeper, till a silent motion on the part of my stepmother prevailed upon him to withdraw. She extended her arms in silence to him; he enfolded her in his, reclined upon her shoulder, and deep sighs struggled from his breast.

Flora had vanished, but not one of us had observed that she was gone.

All is at present still, so still at home; they know that the beloved daughter of the house is sleeping a sleep of great importance. The Philosopher looks in the last stage of gloom. In his unearthly tone of voice he has said: "If Miss Selma dies, it will not be worth while to live any longer. Sunshine will have disappeared from the world."

22nd April.

Our home is not to be deprived of its sunshine. The crisis is past and—Selma out of danger. We give thanks to heaven, we congratulate each other, and yet, yet we cannot fully rejoice. The career which is now opening to Selma has not a cheerful aspect. A short time back, while Selma was still asleep, I encountered my stepmother with an open letter in her hand and an expression of deep despondency on her countenance. Methought she appeared suddenly to have grown older by several years.

"*She* is still sleeping!" said I in an encouraging tone, "and I think she begins to breathe with more and more facility and freedom."

"It must be as heaven's pleasure is," answered my stepmother in a quiet and almost dispirited manner. "I scarcely venture to wish she may live. There is so much that may cast gloom upon her future life—that I can now perceive. Flora will marry the man who is of all men most suitable for my Selma, the only one she really loves, the only one I seriously would wish to call my son. St. Orme has taken his departure and has sent me a letter which confirms all that I have apprehended for some time past. During the whole winter he has borrowed money of me sometimes in large and sometimes in smaller sums, which he always promised to refund but has not yet refunded; and I was credulous enough or rather weak enough to take his bare word without any written voucher. And now he writes to me in a mere dry and indifferent strain: 'I shall pay you as soon as possible,' &c. But I know what that signifies; he will *never* pay me, and I, who have lent him amounts far beyond my means, and in order to do it was necessitated to borrow from others, am plunged into extremely great embarrassment. I did not merit this at St. Orme's hands! And yet it would not trouble me so much, if I alone were concerned. But it will be too bitter for me, if my good and beautiful daughter must live in want and privation. No, rather than that, let her go to our Master if it is His will;—though I shall be very lonely and forsaken in my old days."

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* The Swedish word in this and some other passages is *orm* (apparently of the same stock with our word *worm*) and signifies a serpent, or worm. The coincidence of sound between Orm and St. Orme, gives some point to the original, which it is impossible to preserve in the translation. Tr.

Big tears rolled over the pale cheeks of my stepmother ; she dried them with the tips of her silk shawl. This carried my heart entirely away, and kneeling before my stepmother I conjured her to regard everything I possessed as her own property, and to concede me the rights of a daughter in her heart ; I—if Selma were to die—would never forsake her.

She thanked me, she embraced me, but seemed to find little consolation in what I offered her. Selma's awaking again to life threw all anxieties for a time in the back-ground, and made joy alone prevail; the ominous birds soon re-appeared. The Philosopher looks very happy and makes such bright grimaces at me that I cannot help returning them in a friendly manner.

23rd April.

The Viking too, upright, warm-hearted William Brenner, has been deceived—almost ruined, by St. Orme.

And his children ! My heart bleeds for him and feels the suspension of his visits here bitterly.

Lennartson has been here every day, happy at the happy turn in Selma's distemper ; but he has not desired to see her. He is now deeply concerned at Brenner's misfortune, though the latter bears it with manly composure. Lennartson has like a brother offered him assistance, but this he refused, strongly convinced that, in the course of a few years, he will be able to help himself. "But this I will say to you, brother," he pursued with cheerfulness mingled with melancholy, "if our Commander summons me to his army above, before I once more get a firm footing here on earth for me and mine, I will bequeath you an inheritance."

"And that will be ?" inquired the latter.

"My children."

A silent shake of the hand between both friends followed, and thus it is that noble spirits understand each other.

But the same words cost me a tear ; for Brenner would not allow me to participate in the inheritance. He does not yet esteem me high enough for that.

In the middle of the month of May he is to sail for the Mediterranean.

26th April.

Deeply affected by the situation and care-worn appearance of my stepmother, I asked her this day why she did not confide her case to her half-brother ; he would certainly be able to aid her.

But this she declined with a sort of alarm. "No, no !" she cried. "It would not be worth while ; It would avail nothing." I was astonished ; I thought it must be of great avail ; the Court Chamberlain could never find a better opportunity of gratifying that passion of which he made frequent mention—"To do good in a quiet way." "Yes, I know how to construe that," rejoined my stepmother with a sigh ; but greatly concerned about a considerable payment she had to make in some days, she at length resolved in the evening to send to her brother. He came and seemed much embarrassed at the confidence she reposed in him. At last he advised his sister to transfer her property and declare herself *insolvent!* In this manner she would be best able to extricate herself. With an indignation and an elevation of sentiment which won to her my entire affection, my stepmother rejected the plan proposed. "Rather would she live on bread and water and make trial of the utmost necessity than that any one should sustain injury through her." The Court Chamberlain declared these sentiments to be "very handsome, very respectable," but begged her "to put her reason under arrest," &c. My stepmother would not listen to anything of the kind, her brother had no other advice to give, and he then got a look from me, after which he quickly withdrew, jesting upon "my Jupiter-mien" and alleging important "business." My warm, hearty approval of my stepmother's sentiments and conduct seemed afterwards to comfort and inspirit her.

29th April.

Beautiful, warm days, made still more beautiful by Selma's recovery. The quiet seriousness which now predominates in her manner, does not prevent her accepting with grateful joy every fresh little gift that life and friendship bestow. My stepmother strives to conceal from her the secret disquietude and grief she feels, but she is frequently on the verge of betraying both. At my entreaty she has now confided the state of her affairs to Lennartson, who seems chosen to be a help to all men.

How things stand between Lennartson and Flora I do not rightly understand. Yesterday I met them both in the ante-chamber ; he had wound his arm round her waist, she leant her head upon his shoulder ; on the table before them lay the red letter-case, the object of so much pain and trouble. Lennartson appeared to have spoken in a serious and tender strain, Flora was deeply affected, but I fancied neither was happy. Flora has passed but brief spaces of time here at home and with Selma, and still continues an enigma to me. She has just written a few words to me to the effect that, since she may now be at rest on the subject of Selma's health, she is going to accompany her sister on a journey of pleasure to Swartsjö, there to listen to the song of the nightingale ; but on the third of May she will be here again.

Flora travels and amuses herself and leaves the friend who has sacrificed herself for her to her silent sufferings ! Flora's brother also might lay claims to her society and care ; his health is very vacillating and the physician has ordered him to go abroad this spring and visit one of the warm baths of Germany. But amid all the distress her kindred experience, Flora thinks only of cheering her own spirits and listening to the notes of the nightingale. What deep-seated egotism ! But I will not yet pass judgment upon her. Perhaps she journeys to the quiet park of Swartsjö, there to listen in peace to her own "internal voice."

30th April.

To-day Selma was so well that I could desire her to give me intelligence respecting her meeting with St. Orme, and the magic power by which she had been able to lure from him in a moment the arms he had held fast so long, and bring to nought the victory he had just won. The little which Selma told me and on which I would not permit

her longer to enlarge, because I was apprehensive that she might become too strongly excited by doing so, has led me to form the following view of the occurrence in question.

It was at the moment in which Flora seemed irrecoverably sinking into a bottomless abyss, when Selma felt herself animated in heart and will strongly enough to brave anything to rescue her. The fear of arriving too late to prevent a meeting between Lennartson and St. Orme, and the persuasion that danger was impending on several sides made her almost unconsciously follow the latter's footsteps. She scarcely knew anything of herself before she found she was at his door. And the strange reception she met with from him can only be explained by an extraordinary temper of mind in him.

St. Orme had left the bride whom he had bound to him by force and cunning, had quitted her with apparent coldness and joy of triumph. But no man remains cold to the fury of a woman when it has gained a place in his heart. St. Orme was anything but tranquil when he quitted Flora. The storm of that hour shook its pinions bodingly over him; and through the strength of contrast probably at that moment awoke in him a reminiscence of an entirely dissimilar character.

That very day was the anniversary of the day when St. Orme several years before had led to the altar the beautiful and noble Virginia Adelan, his only generous and pure affection.

And now they stood there in close juxtaposition —the two different moments of time, the two different brides; he thought of Virginia's modest kiss on that day; he still was sensible of that which came glowing, like the flames of hate, from Flora's lips —and his heart turned from her, and he felt it irresistibly drawn towards the beautiful young creature who was once his partner. He thought of her beautiful affection, how she remained still faithful to him in the last hour; perhaps he thought how at that time, he, in the romance of his sorrow, had conjured her to forgive him and besought her to reveal herself to him after her death, and that she had promised him this. Perhaps St. Orme desired to banish those thoughts from him and call up others from the opera dressing-room and the *boudoirs* of Paris—but amid these brilliant and glittering images, arose again and again the pallid form of his young consort as he last saw her in her white shroud—and a feeling of gloom stole like a breath from the tomb into his breast.

He was sitting moveless in his room, oppressed and pensive, looking gloomily upon the increasing twilight, when the door opened softly and a female form, enveloped in white from top to toe, appeared before him.

St. Orme rose, but he reeled and sunk back on the sofa stammering in a low tone:

"Virginia!"

"Virginia invokes you together with me!" replied Selma's sweet voice, "O, St. Orme, do hear us."

And then flowed from her lips words she herself did not remember and which appeared inspired by a higher spirit. The ebullition of the moment had opened St. Orme's heart; the recollection of Virginia, the prayer in her name, the peculiar feeling he had ever entertained for Selma, the extraordinary step she had then taken, the deep seriousness of her statement, the words about life and death coming from such beautiful young lips —all this made his mind vacillate, made him listen to Selma's prayer for Flora's freedom. Selma remarked his wavering, but she fancied she also saw the moment approaching when this would cease and he be obdurate to her entreaty. And suddenly she renounced the tone of a petitioner, to represent to him almost threateningly the certain consequences which would ensue to him, in the event of his abiding by his purpose. She communicated to him Flora's words and resolves for the future; she showed him Lennartson, Brenner and Felix also on the point of asserting Flora's liberty with sword in hand; she pointed out to him danger, death, and destruction, as the furies whom he would encounter on his path; and St. Orme—shuddered.

In the modern romance it has uniformly been the order of things to exhibit the vicious or the *profligate* as by preference the strong and vigorous man. But real life shows us the reverse of this—*it* demonstrates to us that above all things it is the man of probity, the noble-spirited man who is strong and powerful, whose resolution and faith stand fast till death. The ignoble, the vulgar-minded man may at certain times appear strong and heedless of danger, but at certain hours of peril sudden out-breaks of vacillation indicate that he bears a craven heart in his bosom, that he feels himself standing on uncertain ground.

What took place in St. Orme at that hour I will not say; still less will I determine what part of Selma's address made most impression on St. Orme—but certain it is, that he then felt the necessity of yielding to her demands.

Looking gloomily before him, and muttering the words of the unhappy Philippe Egalité when at the guillotine:

"The one abyss is as good as the other," he went to his escritoire and took out the red case containing Flora's letters. He gave them to Selma with the words:

"You are my Virginia's sister, Selma, and for your sake I surrender that which no other power would have prevailed upon me to surrender. Tell Flora that she is free. My presence shall no longer be irksome to you—I shall depart the day after to-morrow. You may now go; you have attained your object and may be satisfied."

Selma was preparing to thank him but he interrupted her with harshness, almost rudeness, and begged her "to spare her sentimental prating to him and go her way." Selma withdrew in fear, but at the door she turned round with the words:

"O, St. Orme, whatever you say, still I will bless you."

She heard St. Orme whistle and hastened down the stairs; here happened to her———that which I have already indicated and which exceeded the strength of her finely sensitive, noble frame.

After telling me what I desired to know, Selma, with strongly heightened complexion, begged me to describe to her Lennartson's demeanour towards her during her illness, for she had only an obscure conception of it. I told her everything, and an unspeakable, hearty joy beamed from her eyes, and found vent in grateful tears. She felt that she was loved by him; she knew that she stood spot-

less and pure in his sight. That was sufficient joy for her.

1st May, in the Afternoon.

The Commercial Ladies: and stored with gossip to such an extent that it ran over at their mouths. The report of Flora's marriage, not with St. Orme, but Lennartson, was a leading topic with them; the great ball to take place at the Palace the day after the morrow was a second; the afternoon promenades at the zoological gardens and the fine new equipages which would be there exhibited, a third: and a fourth was the loss of the entire fortune Brenner had saved, together with his departure for the Mediterranean and his long absence. They had accurate knowledge of the manner in which he meant to make his household arrangements during that absence, and entertained a multitude of cares about it. The eldest boy was to be put into the new school, conducted on the plan of Hill; and for the care and supervision of the rest of the children, Brenner had taken into his house a certain Mrs. Trollman,—"a tolerably decent woman, but a confirmed coffee-drinker," who brews that beverage day and night and is the veriest gossip in the world. And as to housekeeping, a notion of how that will be may be formed, when it is known that during the life-time of Trollman, of happy memory, they never baked at home, but fetched the entire amount of bread they consumed from the baker's shop, and yet there were four children and two servant maids in the house!!! We can conceive then how things will be; everything went wrong. It is really incomprehensible how Commodore Brenner could take such a person into his house: but then she thrust herself upon him when during the children's illness she, as a neighbour, was so officious and good to them.

"Have the children been sick then?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, they have had the scarlet fever, poor little ones, and the two youngest are said to be still very ill of it, especially the lame boy. Well, it were a happy release for him if the Lord would take him."

"Poor Papa," I sighed.

"Yes, poor fellow!" cried Miss P——. "And to be now obliged to go on a voyage and leave his house in such misery! And he too, it is said, looks as if he had been buried not *once* but *twice*."

"But tell me now in confidence, my sweet madame," whispered the lady of Colonel P—— in a confidential manner, "when will the great, remarkable engagement be declared here?"

I declared my perfect ignorance of the matter.

"The earlier this takes place," pursued the lady, "the better for Flora, to silence all the evil mouths which assert that probably nothing at all will come of it. There were strange rumours in circulation for a time. And one is looked upon so badly by inquisitive people, who think that I must know a little of what goes forward here in the house, where I am so well known and—I was going to say—know every chair; yes, they actually upbraid me for not being better instructed—but unfortunately I am so little inquisitive! On this subject, however, I confess I should like to be accurately informed, both for Flora's and my good Miss Adelan's sake."

If the lady was unfortunately too little inquisitive, I was equally little communicative, and—to speak the truth—what I had just heard about Brenner made me incapable of listening, and talking of other subjects.

I am eager to know whether Brenner will wish to see me before his departure.

3rd May, in the Evening.

This day Selma was able for the first time to enjoy the mild, exhilarating vernal air as it was wafted gently through the open window into my stepmother's closet.

A lark ascended exultingly above the river into the blue ether, white sails rode slowly on in the Knights' bay, and the mountains on its strand were clothed with verdure;—Selma saw all this and smiled with tears in her beaming eyes.

"How charming a scene is that!" said she. "How sweet and beautiful is life!"

She extended her hands to my stepmother and me, who stood on either side of her, looked attentively at us, and pursued with a tender smile: "Why so serious? Why so solemn, as if my interment were in question? Now I am in health, now it is spring and we will be cheerful."

My stepmother rose hastily and was going to withdraw in order to conceal her emotion; but Selma held her back by her dress, and, flinging her arms round her, cried:

"No, my mamma! Go not away. Now we may speak frankly, now I can hear all; now I must know what it is—wherefore those I love look so confounded. And perhaps it is nothing unexpected by me; perhaps I have long augured how things stand. Tell me, tell me unreservedly, has St. Orme deceived us? Do our concerns wear a bad aspect, in a word— are we poor?"

"Yes, we are poor, my sweet child!" said my stepmother, weeping aloud and bending over the head of her sedentary daugher, whose tresses and forehead were flooded with her tears. She could say no more.

"But truly we are not poor in affection," said Selma. "And then it is not such a perilous thing. I have my mamma and my mamma has me, and we both have Sophia;—we are therefore affluent still."

"And we have Lennartson too," said I, and added some words on the manner in which he was interesting himself about our concerns.

"That is like him," said Selma, with deep, almost unruffled emotion.

After we had become more tranquil, we spoke calmly and with clearness on the state of our affairs. It was Selma who made light of everything, and demonstrated to her mamma that by selling the whole of her jewellery, together with her collection of pictures, they could satisfy all claims and still have something left. Selma had obviously a more distinct conception of the affairs of the house than her mother. "And," she pursued in a buoyant spirit of fortitude, "having ordered everything here in Stockholm, we will retire to some pretty little city, settle there, and *live sparingly*. And I too will for once in the way do something for food and raiment, and not, as heretofore, merely live like the lilies of the field. I will impart some of my great accomplishments to people who desire knowledge, or translate

books, or even write books. Who knows when inspiration may come? And Sophia shall be my reviewer. Ah, we will achieve great things!"

"Ah, if the Sylphide will but dance to us as formerly," said I, "I shall fear nothing in the world."

My stepmother wept no more. Comforted and animated with a new spirit, she embraced her daughters, and thanked Heaven for both.

The Philosopher announced — "Baron Lennartson."

Selma turned pale and raised herself up, visibly trembling. I asked her whether she would go into her chamber to rest a little while.

"No," she replied, "I feel strong enough to see him. My mamma and my Sophia are, moreover, with me."

With an exclamation of glad surprise, Lennartson hastened to Selma as soon as he saw her. She extended him one hand, which he briskly seized; but both were too strongly moved to speak immediately. It was Selma who first broke silence, saying in a tolerably firm voice—

"We all have to thank you so much, so infinitely much! How kind you are in standing by us in these cares."

We then came to Selma's assistance, and related to Lennartson what had just been discussed among us. He appeared rejoiced to be allowed to speak frankly to Selma on the posture of our affairs, and showed her the written plan he had projected. And according to this it seems that our situation is far better than we thought.

When Selma spoke cheerfully about the disposal of her pictures, Lennartson seemed moved, for he well knew how dear and precious they were to her, even on account of him who had collected and presented them to her—her beloved father. But he admitted that by means of such disposal the affairs of the house might be most safely and speedily restored to order, and said he knew a purchaser on whom reliance could be placed.—(I must be greatly deceived if this purchaser is not —the Baron himself; I fancied I could see it in his appearance.)

As to the rest, he begged my stepmother and Selma to be at ease, and leave all things in his hands; he would endeavour to dispose all things for the best. Being then compelled to withdraw seemed a difficult thing for him. On taking leave, he held Selma's hand long in his; he seemed desirous to say something, but only his eyes spoke a silent yet emphatic language. At length he pressed her hand reverently to his lips, bowed lowly to her, and retired.

And Selma! she stood moveless there, so beautiful in her feminine nobility, happy amid her misfortune to feel her own personal worth, and see it acknowledged by such a man; and this consciousness at that moment elevated her above every embarrassment and every pang. She did not again abase her eyes before his inly eloquent look, but met them with a hearty, bright glance; she shunned not to let him look into the depths of her soul; she knew that he was great enough to be able to perceive the feeling that lived in that glance for him without misunderstanding her, or allowing himself to be diverted from his course. There they both stood, full of divine confidence in each other. But yet the afternoon's scene had been too much for Selma's frail physical powers. When Lennartson was gone, her utmost fortitude also disappeared, and she sank almost fainting in my arms. Perhaps she, like myself, felt there was something of especial import in Lennartson's silent farewell; perhaps what rumour says is true—that this evening he will appear at the Palace as Flora's betrothed, and receive the congratulations of the royal family and all the world there. On going to rest, Selma asked me if I knew anything about Flora.

I answered that I had heard she was that day returned from her journey to Swartsjö, and would be present with her sister at the ball given at the Palace the same evening. At the same time I could not forbear adding some serious words of reproach on Flora.

"Ah!" sighed Selma, "it is really strange! nor do I comprehend her; but all things will one day be clear, and Flora no less. I have loved her so strongly." And then she began to weep bitterly.

I left my stepmother reading aloud to Selma by the evening lamp, and went up into my room, yearning to be alone with my thoughts. And I am seated there alone with them, and I have written the foregoing notices amid the hollow rattling of carriages rolling over the Norr-bridge up to the Palace. It is now midnight, and not a sound is stirring in the streets. From the Palace windows facing the Lion Mount, a bright amber reflection is gleaming through the half-dark May night—there the chambers of state are situated; and when I think of the different scenes *there* and *here*, when I represent to myself Flora shining in beauty and joy, greeted and honoured as Lennartson's bride, while she is unmindful of her nearest kindred now in sorrow, leaving her friend and deliverer to a life of denial,—my heart grows embittered against her, and I feel that the hatred about which we jested for a while has become serious. If she stood before me at this moment, she should hear words which would mantle her forehead with shame, inspire her with aversion for herself, and—sooner or later she shall hear them.

4th May.

Last night I was interrupted by a carriage stopping before our door, and a low stir which arose in the house; immediately afterwards I heard, to my great surprise, light footsteps on the small flight of stairs leading to my room and Flora's.

It was about one o'clock in the morning. With a candle in my hand, I went out into the corridor, in order to see who the silent nocturnal wanderer was, and started not a little when I—saw Flora before me; Flora in her brilliant ball-dress, with a wreath of white roses on her head, but so pale, so changed, that she appeared rather like one who had come from the tomb than a brilliant ball.

"Can I speak to you?" said she, in a voice which to me also seemed altered. "But pray extinguish the light; my eyes will otherwise pain me. I have recently seen too much light."

I fulfilled her wishes, and followed her into my room, where she threw herself into an easy-chair. We were both silent. I did not recollect a word of my lecture.

"Is it not true, Sophia," Flora at length began, "that you some days past, and especially to-night, have hated me in full earnest?"

"Yes, it is true," I answered.

"I do not wonder at it," continued Flora; "but in that you have not done altogether right, and soon perhaps you will—hate me no more.

"You have more than once been good to me, Sophia, and therefore I now request you—after the manner of the world—to continue still kind to me, and listen to me with patience. But I am not entirely selfish; I know how painful it is to cherish bitter feelings, and will therefore seek to eradicate those I have inspired you with, if possible, before —— But I must make haste.

"In me you have found a strange and incomprehensible being, and I will now give you the key to this. You have sometimes talked to us about *primitive words*, and the primitive word of my mysterious character lies deeply hid in my childhood and youth, the influences that surrounded my cradle, and which accompanied me till my twentieth year. My mother was a good-natured but vain woman, my father a harsh and haughty man, who despised all women, probably because in his intercourse with them he had not discovered one whom he could really esteem. Discontent prevailed in the house, and both parents harmonised only in educating their child merely for display, merely for brilliancy, and then to leave her to seek her fortune in the great world. At an early age vanity and ambition wrestled with the nobler sentiments of my mind, but the latter were soon forced to succumb to the former; the heart that could have beat for a generous affection, was constrained to move for petty and ignoble objects; and all those endowments which might have subserved greater and better purposes, were pressed into the service of vanity. O destiny and lot of woman! Even in my childhood they poisoned my mind with praise, flattery, and presents, when I had been successful in society, and drawn upon me attention and admiration. This continued during the entire period of my youth; to obtain a good match, to win a brilliant position in the world, was exhibited to me as the sole object of my life. I too lived more and more for that object, and sought only to nourish my vanity, which continued to exceed all bounds. My natural gifts favoured me, and I made a conquest where I wished; but in the insolence of triumph I rejected such easily won victories, speedily rejected them, in subserviency to my parents' intentions, and lived only for my own pleasures. That I made some honourable men unhappy by this, served but to flatter my vanity. I myself continued cold. At this stage I met St. Orme. You know how his fame, his talents, and presence, enchanted me. For the first time I became acquainted with love, his homage flattered my *amour propre*. His principles consummated the annihilation of the little good I still possessed; he awed me by a certain superiority of resolution and mind, and for a time exercised extraordinary influence over me. But this was of a demoniacal character, and had not really struck root in my inmost heart—my better nature. When I saw that he had forgotten me, pride and love of the world aided me to forget him also. New impressions succeeded to these. Selma, with whom I came in intimate contact about this period, exercised an inspirating, beneficial influence over me. I connected myself with her, as far as my selfish heart would permit me, and many better feelings were again awakened in my bosom by her hearty friendship and beautiful and pure spirit.

"My father died, in his will naming Lennartson as my guardian, probably with a view to his soon becoming something more to me. This was a match in every point of view flattering to my vanity; nor did it require the hints of my mother to determine me to strive to make a conquest over him. I deemed this an easy matter, but I was mistaken; and while I continued to approach nearer and more near to Lennartson, I perceived in his spirit, activity, and aspirations, a greatness in comparison with which all that I had previously loved and attained appeared to me contemptible and petty. Besides which, he was so amiable, so agreeable, even when he blamed me, that my heart soon joined in the game, and he became the end and aim of my life. I saw but too clearly that I had made an impression upon him, and though he preserved entire his independence of character with respect to myself, and seemed resolved not to allow himself to be fascinated by me, yet still I doubted not that I should finally succeed in this under some one of the forms and colours I had——chameleon-like—accustomed myself to assume, with a view to please dissimilar natures and minds. But the forms I assumed were, so to speak, without soul; and, as the pure beam of the sun dissipates the false meteors of the night, so did Lennartson's glance penetrate and scatter all those semblances I wore. His character became more and more potent, overpowering, and destructive, in its influence on my self-love, more perilous to my peace of mind; and never was I more deeply sensible of its power and my misery, than at the hour I perceived that he penetrated and—contemned me. Contempt from him we love, and the consciousness that we are justly contemned—ineffable anguish!"

Flora sprang hastily up, opened the window facing the stream, put back her tresses from her forehead, and seemed eagerly to inhale the cool, fresh night air. The spectacle which lay extended before her view was well calculated to quiet and raise up an excited spirit. Crystal-clear and moveless the May night reposed above the city; the dark volume of the Palace, with the lights glimmering from it, rose in calm majesty to the deep azure sky; enveloped in dark shades the Holm of the Holy Spirit lay below, with its train of lonely, bloody associations; the silvery waters of the Mälar lake reposed unruffled between its banks, and spread out in the distance their quiet mirror, canopied by fleecy clouds. The pennants of the vessels in port hung motionless in air. Everything seemed hushed in sleep, and the peace of the night suggested to the mind that the struggles of the day were transitory.

After a time Flora continued in a more quiet manner. "I remember it as if it had happened yesterday. From long custom and desire also to excite jealousy in Lennartson I had flirted with a man who was attached to me, but about whom I did not concern myself; I led him into follies and then made him ridiculous in Lennartson's presence. The latter in that instance infringed the forbear-

ance he had up to the day in question observed towards me; he spoke sharply to me, unveiled me to myself and showed me what a censurable course I was pursuing. Such serious words no one had before spoken to me, never before had any one treated me so unsparingly. My first feelings at it were pride and anger; I spurned the bold man for ever from me. My second impulse was to write to him, lay open my whole heart and let him see what feelings he had inspired me with. I was so accustomed to conquer, that I expected immediately to see Lennartson at my feet. He came, yet—like a brother, tender but earnest, and only from a certain degree of embarrassment in his deportment could I conclude that he had understood but *would* not understand me. Ah, I was not the woman he could love, and choose for his companion through life.

"On remarking this my pride was roused and it bade me subdue my affection, but the latter commanded me to master my bad propensities that I might become worthy of him. The kindness and sympathy he evinced towards me and the pleasure he felt in my talents, bound me more and more intimately to him, and inspired me with the desire of conforming my character to that ideal of beautiful *womanhood* which seemed constantly present to Lennartson's mind. But ah! when we have once been warped by artifice, nothing is more difficult than to form ourselves again to truth and simplicity of character. The most tangled knot is more easily unravelled than the intricacies of a perverted being. And only *those* can understand me who—like myself—in their endeavours to elevate themselves and attain to a better point of view, ever feel as if some evil genius were perpetually thrusting them down into the abyss out of which they would ascend; and who have experienced the painful sensation of constantly sinking beneath their own existence.

"About this time my mother fell sick of a distemper which terminated in her death. I nursed her with tenderness, and what all my arts and personal gifts had failed to accomplish was effected by this simple circumstance. When Lennartson saw me fulfilling my filial duties, he cultivated a more intimate connection with me; I regained his respect and his heart seemed to respond to the feeling I entertained for him. At my mother's death-bed he pressed to his heart her who was bereft of both parents, begged her to place her hand in his, and sacred vows were exchanged.

"What followed this you know; Lennartson was summoned to his father and travelled abroad with him. An unexpected inheritance made me rich, and St. Orme returned and taught me what a net I had entangled myself in. I now loved Lennartson, and simultaneously with my connection with him a new life awoke in me; but he was absent when St. Orme came back, and the latter again acquired somewhat of his former power over me and his pernicious influence. His boldness of resolution and strength of mind again awed me, and he flattered my love of the joys and triumphs of vanity, which I had not entirely eradicated, and gave fresh animation to it. On Lennartson's return he regained his power and St. Orme's star faded; but I no longer was at liberty to sever myself from him. I was in his power, and my entreaties for deliverance were impotent as my threats. And then hatred and fury rose in my heart and continued more and more to increase, the more strongly I became persuaded that he did not love me, but my fortune. But you know all this, you are acquainted with my struggles, you know that the victory was gained at the moment when all appeared lost—and I will not repeat it. But do you also know, Sophia, to what extent I am at this present hour triumphant?"

"What is your meaning?"

"I mean that nothing at this moment prevents me from becoming Lennartson's partner. He has extended his hand to me, overcoming by his generosity that which was to separate us. He knows all and forgives me all for the sake of my love. The cup of felicity is full to the brim and is presented to me at the hand of fortune and grace. Now there is still one thing remaining to me."——

"And that is?"

"To reject, to forego him."

"How!"

"Ah! at the hour I saw Selma upon her bed of suffering, on which she lay for my sake, and in the heat of her fever heard her pronounce the long concealed secret of her heart; perceived Lennartson's feelings towards her and saw their glances mingle,—at that hour I was inspired to sacrifice myself and become alone the unhappy one. But I was little used to nourish generous thoughts; and I combated the above suggestion and sought to persuade myself that Lennartson still loved me in his heart, and that I could speedily regain the affection I had forfeited by my conduct. I wished to show myself generous and candid and put the letters which had made me so unhappy into Lennartson's hand, entreating him to judge me—I was assured almost to conviction that he would not accept them. Nor did I deceive myself; he put them from him, but he took my hand in his and led me to swear, swear solemnly, that neither in those letters nor in my earlier connection was there anything that could preclude my becoming '*the wife of an honest man.*' Such were his expressions, and I swore. Thank heaven I could do so! He then drew me to him and spoke to me words of heavenly kindness and noble sentiment; but he confessed that his heart was no longer mine as before, confessed another affection—I knew for whom, though her name was not mentioned. He asked me if I would have patience with him and assist him in his efforts to overcome his passion, that he might fulfil his duty to me. In order to do that he would for a while become a voluntary exile from his native country, till he felt that he was free again and could offer me a heart more worthy of me than his then was, and more capable of making me happy, as it was his will and purpose to see me.

"'We have both,' he said in conclusion, 'erred from the straight path; but the right road is still open to us, let us strike into it. I shall soon quit Sweden, but during my absence you will write to me and I to you; in this manner we will understand each other better and approximate more closely. We will at present separate only that, after some time, we may unite more intimately. We will, my Flora, unite not in *insincerity*, but *truth*. Therefore I have now laid my heart bare to you, as I will ever lay it bare to *her* whom I hope to call my partner. I perceive I have grieved you—forgive

me ! Love me notwithstanding, and have faith in me. I will never forsake you.'

"Thus spoke Lennartson, and pressed me to his breast, and in that hour I felt my heart transformed. O the magnanimity and kindness of this man subdued all that was low and paltry in me, they elevated me, and showed me the right way. I begged him to allow me some days for consideration before I gave him an answer, and travelled to Swartsjö ; not to listen to the notes of the nightingale, but to the 'voice within me,' to collect myself to reflection and to *pray !* O Sophia, during these few days past I have for the first time prayed from my inmost heart, and felt that my supplications were heard, and experienced the truth of the words, that 'the strength of God is mighty in the weak'—during these days I have felt how my resolution was changed, my good purposes strengthened, my heart renewed, and life and the world made clear to me.

"I returned to Stockholm in order to appear at the ball at the Palace. I rouged my pale cheeks and made myself beautiful and brilliant as possible. In my pride I would once more triumph over the world, that—I knew—was maliciously occupying itself with me. Then I purposed accomplishing a more important deed. This is to deliver two noble beings, unite them together and then myself —to disappear from the arena. Do not regard me with so gloomy, inquiring a glance, Sophia ! Be tranquil. Thoughts of suicide have no more existence in my soul. It has received too great and gentle impressions. My good angels, Selma and Lennartson, have chased the night from my spirit and caused the day to dawn upon it ;—some rays from it must be shed upon them to thank and to bless them. Take no anxiety about me. The life and the suffering that may await me I shall bear in stillness."

"O Flora ! " I cried, with emotion, "you are worthy of a better lot."

"Do not pity me ! " said Flora, with a cheerful, spirited expression ;—"Do not pity me, Sophia. I have gained much, I have gained what I did not previously possess, I have gained *human worth.* And at the present moment I feel a security and a calmness of mind which I have not heretofore experienced. I feel that I am elevated ; I feel that I shall be elevated in the estimation of all whose approbation and respect are dear to me. O allow me to preserve the consciousness of this, however ostentatious it may appear ; allow it me as an aid in surmounting a heavy, a bitter hour.

"No ! I do not complain to myself. I feel that I have conquered. But I will pity the many who, in a like condition with myself, receive not such helps and are lost for ever, who from false training and a perverted education become dissipated at the very outset of their lives, and can never afterwards entirely collect themselves.

"Ah ! I too am dissipated to the very roots of my nature, and shall never regain my *integrity.* Like a fragment of a better being I shall pass through life, perhaps merely to warn for the present time and point out a better future.

"Do you observe, it dawns ! do you observe how bright it is growing ? O assuredly, too, will the dawn of humanity ever increase in lustre. Assuredly the idea of the great object of life and the true worth of man will become more and more vivid in the heart. Assuredly woman will be ever more and more respected according to her worth as a human spirit, and acknowledged in the truth of her being. And when, and not before, she is thus acknowledged, when she has acquired her true station in life as a human being and fellow-citizen, she will again become a divine mother to the earth, and a renewed and ennobled humanity will spring from her womb."

The fire of inspiration flashed from Flora's eyes, glowed upon her cheeks and eloquent lips ; she was ineffably beautiful ! Beautiful also at that moment were our natural accompaniments. The rising sun flung his earliest beams on the hill-tops ; the church spires were flaming, the mountains glowed in their tints of roseate light, the Palace windows facing the Logaarden seemed on fire. A low murmur, fraught with the breath of spring, went through the trees of the field and bent the poplars on the margin of the river, the pennants in the harbour streamed merrily to the morning breeze, and swelled by the high tide of the lake of Mälar, the river foamed and flowed through the arches of the Norr-bridge more magnificently than ever, while larks rose up exultingly above it, and snowy seamews plunged into its waters.

Long we stood in silent contemplation of the rising of light and life. At length, directing her eyes to the harbour, where you saw a small pillar of black smoke stoop down as if to point out the way of departure from Stockholm, Flora said :

"Ha ! Gauthiod is now giving a signal and admonishes me to make haste."

"You are going abroad ! " I inquired with surprise.

"With Felix, with my poor brother," answered Flora. "They have prescribed him a visit to the baths at Ems, and I accompany him for his sake and my own. It is necessary that I disappear from this place ; I am nothing but an impediment, and require the air of foreign countries. Felix shall be my chief care ; hitherto he has not found in me the sister he well deserves to have. But in future he shall find such a sister. Perhaps some day the brother and sister who have suffered shipwreck in happiness and in joy, will return to their native land, made whole in heart and as children of greater worth."

"And what do you desire and propose for your own future career ? "

"First and foremost to spend a year abroad. Felix and I must travel. I will contemplate the world with a whetted vision ; I will contemplate woman in her new and higher relation to life and society which has commenced in the present age ; I will look and judge with a pure and unbiassed mind, and then choose an independent station in the realm of the Beautiful or the Good—an interest and a noble object to engage my restless and aspiring spirit. O Sophia, I will commence a new life. I feel that I have reached the turning point of my existence. Farewell to perplexity ! farewell to vacillation ! farewell to delusions ! And now a new sun, a new soil, a new life ! And Heaven's grace on my good intentions ! "

At these words Flora stretched her folded hands towards heaven, tears sparkled in her beaming eyes. Again we were both silent. I was deeply moved. With more calmness Flora pursued :

"You see here, Sophia, a letter to Selma, and

one to Lennartson. They will tell them all. They will also apprise them that the resolution I have formed is the only way to happiness and peace that remains to me. Not one who is my friend is permitted by friendship to endeavour to divert me from it. Gladly would I see my Selma once again, look upon her pure countenance, her sweet, clear eyes, but I must spare her the painful farewell—she has already suffered enough for my sake. But this chaplet,"—she took the wreath of white roses from her hair—"you, Sophia, shall lay upon her bed, at her feet and beg her to preserve and wear it as a token of remembrance from her Flora. I know that I do not merit so pure a memento, but I also know that her heart can cherish none other towards me, without suffering. In Selma's letter I have also written to her mamma; you, too, greet her from me, greet all who you think concern themselves about me, and tell them that I have departed thus secretly, solely to avoid a farewell and its pangs. And now I must hasten. Felix is expecting me: my luggage and my maid are already on board; I will quickly change my dress, and then—Sophia, will you walk with me down to the harbour?"

"To the end of the world, if you wish it," I replied.

"Thanks. You hate me then no longer?"

"Hate you, I love, I admire—"

"Hush, hush! do not put my virtue to shame." At these words Flora vanished: she was speedily attired for the journey, and I ready to accompany her. It was a beautiful morning, full of life and *spring*.

Engaged in a serious but luminous conversation we made our way down to the harbour. Our farewell was full of harmony and tenderness. Flora preserved her strength and fortitude to the last moment; not before I was unable to discern her white handkerchief waving in the distance did I quit my place on the shore. My heart was heavy, but on returning home again thinking of the scene which had transpired, and the intelligence I was charged with to my beloved ones, I fancied my body and spirit had got wings, and wind and wave, and man and brute, and the church towers and stones of the street, and heaven and earth—I thought—joined in my heart's song of exultation.

"Goodness is triumphant."

O! now I will surprise my stepmother: she and Selma are still sleeping. They did not get to sleep till late, said Karin: I am waiting with impatience, and write while I wait. I would not now change my lot for that of an archangel.

N.B., if the latter has any other employment than that of bearing tidings of joy.

10th May.

O Joy, thou beautiful seraph of heaven! how lovely thou art, how worthy of adoration thou art when thou shinest in a tearful eye, when thou beamest in the eye of one departing from earth; how good thou art, when thou fillest the cup of existence for the happy and the noble spirits of this our world; how tender-hearted, when thou tearest away the shreds and patches of remembrance from the unhappy and the miserable, and crownest his temples with a fillet of roses; how beautiful and amiable thou appearest to me when I perceive thy buoyant movements in the human heart! O, that thou wert a being whose presence I could invoke by my prayers, or my heart's blood, then thou shouldst be seen more frequently on earth.

But perhaps thou art less beautiful and less enchanting when thou hast not been preceded by *Pain*, like the sun, which never shines more beautifully on earth than after storm and rain. Are not Pain and Joy the winged pair of life whereby man rises to the home of perfection?

"The buoyant movements of joy in the human heart!" O, I have witnessed them these few days past in our home, in my kindred, though we venture not yet to speak loudly of them. Awe of the remembrance of Flora, and her self-denial, has hitherto prevented it, but the halo of glory her conduct has shed around her continues to shine with greater splendour through the shades of sorrow.

Lennartson and Selma are now united like two beings who have long sought each other, and met at length like two souls that were originally one in their Creator's mind.

True, their happiness has proceeded from too great suffering to allow joy free scope; but beneath the cloud quiet of melancholy which now veils it I hear the God of Love laughing and flapping his wings. O, the Sylphide will still dance, dance upon roses in life.

Flora's letter to Lennartson is of such a character that the latter cannot do otherwise than accept the liberty she remits to him. She evinces clearness and decision of mind, and begs him to vouchsafe to her the consciousness of having made two beloved beings happy, and thereby regaining their and her own respect. "Remorse and self-contempt," she writes, "would in future accompany me at your side, Lennartson, nor could you protect me from them, for you could not love me; but separated from you I shall approach nearer to you. O Thorsten, united with Selma, I feel that your remembrance of me will be full of tenderness, and that I shall again become beautiful in your eyes. Ah, perhaps it is rather egotism than pure affection which guides me at this moment. If such is the case why—forgive me!"

Lennartson's letter to Flora must shed in her soul a ray of unquenchable joy, and awake the consciousness of generosity; and Flora is right; hereafter they will be joined in more intimate union than if they had been espoused.

My stepmother is most interesting, she amuses and affects me at the same time. She is taciturn and quiet, frequently folds her hands and makes an effort to sigh, but her sighs are accompanied by a smile, and cheerful thoughts rise from her heart through the calm seriousness of deportment which she now deems it decorous to assume. She speaks very finely about "the wonderful ways of *Providence*, and the duty of resignation in men." When, now, will she have the heart to be Prince Metternich again?

And I—for I too will not be excluded—I sympathise, I rejoice, I hope and am thankful; but in my heart I am not glad, not tranquil; I am troubled about William Brenner, nor am I satisfied with myself.

Many people remain unmarried from noble and worthy motives, but many too from—selfish ones; the latter I admit to be my case, and acknowledge it with shame. We like to be loved, we like to be

warmed by the flame of a generous heart, yes, to reciprocate a little warmth also, at least as much as our convenience and ease can dispense with; but to marry, when it would entail some burdens and some pains for the future, we have not sufficient courage and virtue.

Meanwhile I am eager to know whether the Viking will see me once more before he sails, for if *he* will not, *I* will, and "*ce que femme veut Dieu le veut**."

13th May.

Most remarkable occurrence in the cabinet council between my stepmother and me.

While occupied with the administration of the state this afternoon, we observed an entirely unusual agreement in our views. Congratulating ourselves thereon, we investigated the cause of this approximation, when it appeared that, inasmuch as my stepmother had eagerly perused divers of the royalistic journals, she had advanced a little towards the side of the opposition, while I, by daily labouring at a paper of a contrary tendency, had gradually become a little more inclined to the government. Most particularly rejoiced at this discovery and felicitating ourselves on our independence, we resolved that, with a view to maintain the accurate balance in future, we would retain the organs of both parties, and we closed our political discussion with taking a hand at a game of Patience with each other.

14th May.

Something about the altered situation and prospects of the family has most likely transpired to the world; for our "spasmodic acquaintances," who, during the dark period, were quite dead to us, have now revived again, like gnats in the sunshine.

The Gyllenlöfs and the Silfverlings inundated us to-day with friendship and compliments. Lennartson came—and then their friendship no longer knew any bounds, but projected the boldest plans for the greatest intimacy in future. My stepmother was courteous, and allowed odd to be even; but Selma put on her princess-like airs, and gave pretty cold answers to Adele Gyllenlöf's friendliness and the Silfverlings' invitations. The—not spasmodic—but to us in every change invariably friendly and kind Signora Luna, was yesterday allowed a glimpse of the new and happy circumstances of our home, and her beautiful eyes beamed with joy as well at Flora's demeanour as Selma's and Lennartson's happiness. She was in full court-dress, and so handsome and brilliant did she look, that I could not forbear saying—

"Signora Luna is indeed blazing in her culmination, and must feel herself prepared for a brilliant career."

She cast at me one of those glances, which reveal a deep-seated, silent grief, and said—

"Ah, it is not all gold that glitters, and the brilliant career —— But it will assuredly have its course. Everything has its course, though at times it seems as if everything were stationary."

Baron Alexander at that moment approached, and observed with his usual authority—

"I must remind you, dear friend, that it is almost nine o'clock. It is time to repair to court. This is to be a brilliant night there."

"And I," said his consort to me, "like so many others, shall sigh in silence with Tegnér—

"'Tell me, pray, watchman, how speeds the night?
And will it then never come to a close?'"

"But, seriously," said I, "is it not entertaining to be in such fine and brilliant society, to see life dressed for parade?"

"It would be so, by all means," replied Signora Luna, "especially since you come into close acquaintance with many agreeable and distinguished persons—if the heart were but light! But how few are there who pass through life with a light heart! And it is well that such is the case, we should else grow too thoughtless."

She smiled a melancholy smile, nodded to me, and disappeared, shaded by the great Alexander.

Domestic happiness or unhappiness; this it is that, more than aught else besides, equalises lots on earth, approximating as it does the lowly roof to the palace, the day-labourer to the king, while it makes an incalculable difference in the life and enjoyment of the mighty.

"Domestic distresses," writes a king who has already made his exit from the stage of life, "are distinguished from common distresses in this, that they press down the spirit by reiterated pains, which they call forth every moment."

"I am the happiest of men!" writes, in a familiar epistle, another monarch, who at this present day wears on his head one of the noblest crowns of Europe; "and you will find few who after an acquaintance of twenty-three, and a union of nineteen years, find the heart of their partner to the full as divine, her eyes to the full as celestial, as in the first days of their love."

15th May.

The Commercial Ladies, the married lady and virgin sister. The latter cast her large watchful eyes about her, put on significant airs, and propounded various amusing questions, as—

"Well, when do you repair to Torneaa? Has not Miss Selma a fancy for a book that bears the title of 'Directions for Economical Cookery?' I thought she might need it. Shall I purchase it for the young lady? It costs sixteen *skilling* (sixpence.)"

A coffee-council in the afternoon between two happy mothers, my stepmother and Mrs. Rittersvärd. "The first cloudless day in the month of June" shall shine on the marriage between Ake Sparrsköld and Hellfrid Rittersvärd.

Wherefore do I write down all this? To endeavour to forget that which is constantly present to my mind.

The Viking is to sail on Sunday evening. The youngest boy is said to be still bed-ridden. It is possible that Brenner will not see and say farewell to me before he departs.

16th May.

A letter from Flora has put us all in good spirits. The change in her is visibly of a permanent nature, and her temper of mind firm and clear to admiration. But wherefore should we feel astonished at this? Has Heaven once opened above the head of a mortal, or have his prayers

* But to speak the truth I have never observed that such is the order of things, and neither do I know whether it would be of any special advantage if it were so.

opened it to him, and has a way arisen on which the angels of God ascend and descend, then there occurs in that being a something which transcends our capacity of comprehension. Then powers move within him, then follow communings, to which the wisest and the best of the earth must bow in admiration and awe. A mortal so circumstanced you must leave alone, alone with the Eternal One.

This, too, is the last and loftiest stage of all human education, and all development of an elevated character. To that point are directed the labours of the state, with all its wisest precepts and ordinances to elevate man. In hostility to it, he can never arrive at that point. If he fancies he can, it is self-delusion. But reconciled and sustained by it, he mounts to a height whither he could not otherwise have attained. A new light, a new connection then springs up for him—*the immediate connection* with the everlasting Good One, who will cheerfully bestow his gifts on men, and "God giveth not the Spirit by measure." Viewed in reference to the creature, I fain would call this the *child-like* connection. It is the most intimate *life* knows. It may be attained by the simplest of men whose intentions are good; but it can *not* be attained by the greatest philosopher, unless he, after having reached the topmost step of the ladder of logic, can fall on his knees like a helpless child in supplication to his and our common Father.

How happy was Lennartson this evening, while, with his beloved Selma and her mamma, he projected plans for their future life! How amiable he was in his joy, and the overflowing vivacity to which he for the first time gave full scope! He did not absolutely allow his bride any rest—a circumstance which of course occasioned her a great deal of trouble.

And my stepmother, how happy she was!

And I—O, I too was happy in seeing those happy ones; I was keenly sensible what pleasure it would be to live with them (for I also—so it is arranged—am to have my home in Lennartson's house) in sympathy with all that existence possesses to interest and elevate us in respect of art, science, public and private life, and in intimate connection with persons of distinguished abilities, and their spheres of action.

O, I feel indeed what a light and agreeable thing it must be to live in the daily enjoyment of what Ehrensvärd calls our "pleasant necessities;" but ——

But what sayest thou, voiceless Orator, that art knocking at my breast? And thou, Wisdom, baptised in the everlasting waters of love, thou whom I have invoked to attend my footsteps and illumine my life—what sayest thou?

Here a life full of sweet enjoyment, comfortable, sunny, cheerful, in the society of noble and amiable people, but who by no means need my presence, and have enough without me. And *there* a falling house, which I could raise up; orphan children, to whom I could be a nurse and a mother; a man, generous and good, whom I could make happy, who loves me and whom I could love; nay, whom I—*do love*. A life replete with labour and care, on which, however, the eye of the Eternal would rather look than the other—a life without splendour on earth, but permeated by the rays of ——

O can I indeed hesitate?

But Mrs. Trollman? Well, very good! The one Troll (enchantress) will drive out the other. Such a thing has already occurred.

But the world? How will it trace the mark of the cross upon itself, and exclaim—"Foolish match! Matrimonial mania! Piece of absurdity!" Ah, well! "*Quand même!*"

Selma, Lennartson, I know what they will say. But my stepmother? How surprised my stepmother will be! To-day is Saturday.

Sunday Morning.

A note from the Viking—manly, cordial, but anything but feeling. He says, however, that he will not give himself credit for *strength* enough to take a personal farewell of me, and therefore does it in writing; begs me to greet my relations; hopes one day to see me again; and in conclusion calls himself my "faithful William."

A bouquet of beautiful flowers tells me more than the note. But I hold it to be unpardonable in my "faithful William," that he will not see and listen to his lady friend before voyaging to the world's end. I feel that the spell is stirring within me.

In the Evening.

A very brief space of time and a very short distance often lie between the present hour and that which, like the stroke of a magic wand, transforms entirely our position in life and future prospects. We ourselves for the most part hold the magic staff in our hand, but whether we employ it for the achievement of our happiness or the contrary, we ourselves frequently do not know. I, however, was tolerably clear on this point, when at the same moment Lennartson took my stepmother and Selma in his handsome Landau for a drive in the Zoological Gardens, I, silent and solitary, undertook a walk to the Ship-holm. It was a quiet, rather dull, but mild summer-like afternoon. I looked upon the objects around me as if I were taking farewell of them. In this way I saluted the region about the Norr-bridge, with the Palace, the statues, and the quays near the river. I said farewell to the beautiful world around me. At the foot of the Ship-holm bridge I came to a pause. Before me, rising through his azure waters, lay the verdant Ship-holm, with his avenues and groves and his temple, built on the rocks, which mirrored itself in the lake. Behind me was the hollow din of the crowds of passengers, in vehicles, on horseback, and foot, who in festive array were streaming towards the Zoological Gardens. I thought of the Landau that was conveying my kindred into the gay, beautiful world—the Landau in which they had but now so pressingly entreated me to occupy a seat. My heart sunk; I felt as if invisible bands were fastened to my feet and pulled me back. It was an hour of torture. The bells of the church-towers then began to chime; and as in early times those of the Christian temples had power to dissipate heathen sorcery, so too did the former at that moment operate on me. The obstructive bands were dissolved, and I went forward excited but resolute. And on entering the verdant groves—they were planted by an aged man, who beautified the evening of his existence by beautifying his native land—looking at the tender foliage

and thinking on the tender children, I became more and more tranquil and free in spirit.

Not before *the long row*, or the Admiralty threw its dark shadows upon me, was I visited again by a certain kind of bashfulness, but of quite a different cast from the former. My conduct was unusual, how would it be looked upon, judged? Brenner himself, how would he——

"The deuce!" said* I at length with vexation, "I do not concern myself about the whole world, why, I merely mean to say farewell to my friend; 'Honi soit qui mal y pense.'"

Brenner was not at home, nor did they expect him till late; I was rejoiced at it: to Mrs. Trollman, who met me with this news, and who by no means looked like a dangerous enchantress, I said that I would wait there till the Commodore should return, because I had something important to speak about; in the interim I would look after little William, in the event of her having anything else to do. With this Mrs. Trollman was quite satisfied, and I soon smelt the fumes of roasted coffee in the house. And then at the bed of the little boy, and with all the other children about me, I began to tell stories, and to feel quite a peculiar complacency of spirit. The current of my stories, however, was broken by footsteps, which were audible in the saloon, and the sudden outburst of exultation on the part of the whole group of children, who rushed to meet their beloved papa. Soon he was in the room with his sick boy, who called out his father's name in a longing strain; on perceiving me, the latter stood still with surprise.

I rose.

"You here?" said he, and seizing my hand, and motioning to the children to leave us alone, he ushered me into another room. "You here, Sophia!" he exclaimed, and regarded me with a searching look.

I did not allow him much time for his astonishment, but said:

"How could you think of leaving me without speaking a kind word in farewell? it was not well, it was not right in you. I could believe you concern yourself no more about me than a seamew."

I was well nigh weeping.

The Viking was silent, and I pursued:

"Now we may see who understands best what is due to friendship: you would not come to me, but I am come to you to bid you—farewell."

"And you are come merely for that? thanks."

He pressed my hand.

Then it became more difficult to go on; I was silent, he was silent; at last he made a violent effort, and pursued in a more mild and subdued tone of voice:

"Thanks for punishing my apparent neglect so kindly; am I permitted now to accompany you home, and make amends for it to your relations?"

"Go, if you desire, I stay here."

"How?"

"I stay with your children, William, till you return from Africa."

Brenner regarded me awhile, and his eyes suffused with tears: "O thou feminine heart!" said he, took hold of my hand, and regarding me with a penetrating look, continued: "and when I come back again, what will you do then?"

* N.B. Quite softly.

"What——you wish," replied I.

Brenner was again silent for a time, he then said in a tone of emotion:

"To have heard that word some time since, I would have given the moiety of the life that remained to me: but now—now it is another thing: what I then wished I wish no longer."

I gazed at him with an inquiring and an astonished look.

"Now," Brenner pursued, "my situation is greatly altered, I possess nothing on earth but—these poor children."

"I know that," I answered.

"I understand you, Sophia!" said Brenner, in a melancholy manner, "and this conduct does not surprise me from *you*. But it implies a sacrifice which I neither can nor dare accept: you refused your hand to a man of wealth—though it was lent to another—you shall not bestow it on—a beggar."

"His gracious majesty has declared me of full age," said I; "am I not allowed to do what I will with my own?"

"No," said Brenner, "you are not; for the resolution, although a generous one, is precipitate, and you durst do nothing you might subsequently repent. Your peaceful life and your fortune must not be sacrificed for the sake of a ruined house; that must not be, say I: do you then believe I am such a selfish, such a——"

"Hush, for all the world, hush! the children might otherwise think we are quarrelling; and that will not do: besides, we need not now come to any conclusions about the future; we may both reflect on the subject during your absence: perhaps in Africa you may find some beauty——"

"Do be still, what nonsense are you talking? but if I come not home again? my voyage may last a long time, be stormy, perilous——if I do not return home?"

"Then I will remain here as their mother till my death."

"Sophia!" cried Brenner with warmth, "you are an angel, and on my knees I must thank you for those words, that intention; but yet, yet I cannot accept it: it is a sacrifice, it is opposed to sense, to reason——"

"Well, very good! and cast sense and reason to the winds," cried I, "is it worth the pains to regard them when we have given our heart away?"

And then——I lay on the heart of the Viking, enfolded in his arms: he called me *his*, and defied the whole world to separate us: he placed his ring on my finger, he led his children to my arms, he told them I should become their mamma, and introduced me as his bride to Mrs. Trollman, who upset her coffee-pot from astonishment."

"Now I escort you home," he exclaimed at length: "I must tell the whole world you are mine!"

"The Viking is somewhat stormy in his happiness," thought I, "but now he may have his will, how surprised my stepmother will be."

Leaning on the arm of the Viking I entered upon my return home: his heart was overflowing, and however sweet it was for me to listen to the swelling tide of emotion there, yet, on his kissing my hand directly under the sentinel's nose (the nose of the sentinel on the Ship-holm) I was constrained to beg him "not to expose me, not to deport himself like a corsair."

"Confess now," he exclaimed, "that your philosophy has not been of much assistance to you, since it could not prevent you venturing the voyage of life with a corsair like me."

"Philosophy!" I cried, "it is precisely that which has conducted me to you."

"Ah bah! I cannot listen to that: do only confess that it is love, pure, divine, irrational love."

"No, not irrational."

"Rational love then; now you speak well: wherefore any ceremony about this word? it is indeed the *Primitive Word* of existence! my beloved one; and true magic power you acquire only through *this word*. Do not now come with your 'Christian love,' for then I shall cast either myself or you into the lake."

Of course I called him a "heathen" and the like. Conversing in this strain we arrived home.

It fell out so luckily that we found my stepmother, Lennartson, and Selma together in the ante-chamber. The Viking pushed the door wide open, and holding my hand in his, strode into the middle of the room, and introduced himself to our three friends seated as they were and exclaimed:

"Congratulate us, now; do you not observe that we are bride and bridegroom?"

With a joyous exclamation Lennartson sprang up from his seat, and uttering the most cordial expressions, enfolded us both in his arms. Selma, too, leaped up half-terrified, half-rejoiced and embraced me, ejaculating at the same time:

"Sophia!"

And my stepmother, she remained seated on the sofa, so constrained, so astonished, surprised, that I fancied she was struck with paralysis, and stood there quite alarmed.

I hastened to her, kissed her hands, and warmly entreated her to pardon my apparent reserve; I myself two hours previously did not know my destiny. I then began a brief explanation of the course of the affair, but was interrupted in this by Brenner, who related the matter in his way, and in such a manner that I think no one altogether comprehended it, though all were obviously moved and satisfied, even my stepmother.

During this recital the clock struck eight and the Viking was obliged to go on board. The moment of separation was now approaching, we felt this to be hard.

"Accompany me down to the linden-trees," he entreated. "I must say some few words more to you beneath the free canopy of heaven."

I followed him among the linden-trees, which the evening sun tipped with gold. We sat down on one of the seats.

"Ah, here it is beautiful!" exclaimed Brenner. "Within the house there it was too confined, too oppressive to separate from you. To-morrow I shall be upon my free ocean, but you, Sophia, will then be an inmate of a confined, quiet home, and that too—for my sake."

"I shall be with your children, William," I replied.

"I have often heard you express a dread of what is heavy, oppressive and laborious in life, of suffering—Sophia. I fear what you will have to encounter, I am apprehensive for your strength, your fortitude."

"Then you do not know me accurately, William. Remember that I am descended from the people and tribe of Wasastjerna. Besides, the suffering I dread, is *that* which enthrals the soul, not *that* which ennobles and elevates it. You have on several occasions spoken as if there were a species of suffering *noble* and beautiful—and for some time past I have felt that you were right."

"You are aware, then, that, in becoming my partner, you must suffer?"

"Yes, William, for I know that the world has its storms and manifold dangers for those who are sailing on the open sea; I know that every tempestuous night will find me sleepless and full of anxiety. But every morning and every evening I will fold the hands of your children in prayer for their father, and the sighs of those innocents shall part the clouds above your head and quiet wind and wave. O! William, be not concerned about me. I rejoice in loving and suffering. But," I continued wishing to allay Brenner's excited feelings and give a more cheerful turn to the conversation, "you have not yet given me any precepts for the children's education. I conjecture that I am not permitted to teach them any philosophy?"

"Teach them, in the name of heaven, what you will, yes, philosophy, too, especially the philosophy which has made you mine. Teach them that love is wisdom under its most beautiful aspect. And now I must leave you, my, *my* Sophia. Do not stir from this place, let me see your white form under the blue sky, amid the green trees till the last moment." He took my handkerchief, which was moist with my tears, and concealed it in his bosom, saying: "It shall be my flag." Once again he pressed my hand, once again he sank his true glance into my eye and the depth of my heart. Then he withdrew with great strides. Down by the river, before disappearing behind the houses, he turned round once more, looked back and waved his hand in farewell. Slowly I returned home.

Lennartson had gone to take farewell of his friend on board the frigate. My stepmother and Selma surrounded me, the former, however, was evidently a little displeased. But I opened my heart to both and allowed them to see what had been moving there for some time past.

I had the selfish little pleasure of seeing my Selma shed tears at my leaving her, and the joy of having the resolution I had taken perfectly approved by my stepmother and the *manner* in which I had acted not *entirely* disapproved. A little concerned she was as to how it could be made known to the world and in what light the latter would regard it; but after instituting all our "*réflexions chrétiennes et morales*" on the subject, we discovered that the matter was not so dangerous, and the world still less, if we do but encounter it with honesty of purpose and courtesy of manner.

On separating for the night, my stepmother laid a handsome armlet of her own hair around my wrist, and said:

"You must not imagine, my dear Sophia, that I have not anticipated, not seen quite distinctly how all would be, though I was not willing to say anything about it. I have foreseen everything."

"No, have you really, mamma!" I exclaimed.

"Hem—hem—hem!"

"Prince Metternich again," thought I. "Good night, my sweet lady mother," said I.

Monday Morning, 26th May.

"ANOTHER day, another revolution of light and shade!" New friendly day, I greet thee in my new home. Mild is the dawning of life therein!

My mother, Selma and Lennartson accompanied me thither. I hope, too, I shall often see them there again.

I already feel myself at home therein, and Mrs. Trollman is equally at home with me. The principal Troll (sorceress) and second Troll have concluded a substantial peace on certain conditions, which are in the hands of our master. Merrily dance the waves without, bearing the Viking away from his home. In my bosom I wear some words from him, written on board the frigate and wafted to me by I know not what heavenly breeze. There is *love* in them, and the "Primitive Word of existence" is also alive in my heart.

Within the children are waking from the arms of Morpheus, and in me awake cares for them and for household and home.

An end now to my life of silent reflection and daily sketching! Away with Thee, loquacious, but dear Pen, that hast occupied so many hours. And in truth, when we have given away our freedom, reason and heart, then it is well also to lay aside our——DIARY.

THE END.

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MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Bremer, Fredrika,

A diary

[London] [1845?]
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